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["DARLING VERA, YOU CAN NEVER GUESS ALL THAT YOU ARE TO ME!" SAID MAURICE, WARMLY.]

THEN YOU'LL REMEMBER ME.

[A NOVELETTE.]

CHAPTER I.

MILDRED DELORME stood looking a little disconsolately from a window in the breakfast-room of Yorick's farm. It was a July morning, but a bright fire burned in the grate, for the season was unusually cold and wet even for England, and the Delormes were partial to warmth. The rain was falling, as it had fallen for the past three days, with a wonderful regularity; the ground was sodden, the flowers, all bruised and sullied, drooped their heads heavily, and, as Elizabeth Brown expressed it, the trees looked like

"Dull round blots of foliage meant
Like saturated sponges here
To suck the fogs up."

Mildred gave a little sigh.

"No going out to-day," she said. "This is

the third day I have been compelled to stay in. I am positively dying for a breath of fresh air. Oh, my poor roses! How dragged they are, and the strawberries will all be spoiled."

She sat down in the deep old-fashioned window, drumming idly with slender fingers upon the diamond-panes; she was too listless to read, and the new music lying upon a table close by had actually no temptation for her this morning. She had finished all her little duties—there was nothing left her to do, but to sit in dreamy indolence, letting fancy weave the fairy visions in which young girls delight.

She was fair to look upon, this yeoman's daughter, slight of figure, with a sweet face, gentle and good, with an element of pride about it, and mouth and chin, though purely feminine, wore an expression of firmness. For the rest her eyes were grey—deep grey, changing with every varying emotion, and shadowed by black lashes, which formed a striking contrast to the delicate tints of the young face, the corn-coloured hair waving around both brow and throat.

"He will not come to-day," she whispered with a guilty look round the room not, for worlds would she tell what his coming or going meant to her, until the words had been spoken which made her his, and then she blushed a little, and sighed to think how many hours might pass before they met again. The clock on the mantel ticked with painful loudness as the slow minutes wore by, but Mildred was too wrapped in her dreams to be disturbed by it, her mind was too engrossed by one subject to spare a thought to any other.

Suddenly she started, and the blood flamed hotly into her cheeks—there was a quick step on the gravel path, and a hasty glance showed her the figure of a young man approaching. She left her seat and went towards the fire, holding her hands to the blaze—strange how they trembled, how fast her breath came, whilst her eyes and her lips smiled with something that looked the very counterpart of happy love.

A moment later, a neat maid-servant ushered the visitor into the room with the words, "Mr. Firth," and the young girl by

the fire turned to meet him, struggling all the while with her embarrassment.

"This is one of mother's busy mornings," she said, when they had shaken hands, "but I have no doubt she will spare you five minutes, Mr. Firth."

"I would not have Mrs. Delorme disturbed on my account," the young man answered, eagerly. "The drones must not put obstacles in the workers' way."

Mildred laughed softly.

"I am a drone too," she said, "and I was getting very tired of doing nothing. How is Mrs. Firth, and did you walk over here?"

"Oh, the motor is very well, and I rode. I went round to the stables first, and put up Rascal; I thought if I was very good you would ask me to stay."

"Father will be delighted; you will have quite a salutary effect upon him, this unreasonable weather depresses him dreadfully. I wonder that you should venture so far through it."

"I would do more than risk a drenching for you, Mildred," and then he reached out and took one slender hand in his. "I hoped to find you alone, dear, for I have something to say, which I have long lacked courage to say—can you guess what it is? Mildred, I love you, and I want you—your hand in mine—to say, in return, 'I love you, Maurice, with all my heart and strength!'"

The girl was trembling with emotion, the colour came and went in her cheeks, but her beautiful honest eyes met his fully as she repeated his words.

"I love you, Maurice, with all my heart and strength," nor did she repulse him when he drew her closer, until his arm was about the lisom form, and his lips held hers in the first long kiss of satisfied love.

The clock ticked on the mantelpiece, the fire burned low; outside the rain still fell, and the wet sprays of jasmine swung to and fro before the windows; but of these things the young couple were blissfully ignorant, being wrapped in the glory of love. Mildred started from her lover's embrace when the door opened, and a lady, who was merely an elder edition of the girl, entered. Maurice Firth went towards her at once.

"Mrs. Delorme, I think you know what I have to tell you! Mildred has just promised to be my wife. You will not fear to give her to me?"

"No," she said, frankly and affectionately. "I have known you all your life, Maurice, and you are an especial favourite with Mr. Delorme. I hope that Mrs. Firth will be as pleased with this engagement as I am," and then she kissed her daughter, crying a little as mothers will when the children of her love are no longer theirs alone; and Mildred, a little shaken, clung to her, whispering that the new love could not make the old less strong.

Maurice lunched with the Delorme family, meeting a hearty welcome from its head, and then, after a second *à la carte* with his pretty fiancée, rode slowly home through the rain, thinking happily of the future which seemed so bright before him.

Now and then he broke into song—had he not reason to rejoice? The best and dearest girl on earth had promised to be his wife; and he forgot all his former penchants in this one absorbing passion, and, growing humble, prayed he might be made worthy of her.

He was not a rich man, but he was Squire of the place, and there were those who said he might have looked higher than Mildred Delorme, although, indeed, her family was older and more honourable than his, and his mother was one of the number.

But he never gave a thought to this as he went in leisurely fashion towards her boudoir. She looked up as he entered.

She was such a pretty, youthful-looking woman still, it was difficult to believe this stalwart young man could possibly be her son.

"It is you, indeed, Maurice! How mad you must have been to go out in such horrid weather! You are quite sure you have

changed your clothes? I am so susceptible to cold."

"Poor old girl!" he said, irreverently, as he smiled down at the weak, pretty face. "But I was cool for once, I remembered to change. And now, you little apology for a mother, I want your congratulations."

Mrs. Firth lifted herself on her elbow; her eyes had a vexed look, and she pouted like a child.

"You need say no more. Of course you have proposed to Mildred; equally, of course, she has accepted you."

"Yes, and so I ask your congratulations. Is not my happiness yours, mother?"

"My dear boy, yes. Only—only, when Mildred comes here, what am I to do?"

"You are to stay with us. Do you suppose I would let you leave us? And Mildred is not the girl to wish it. She is very fond of you."

Mrs. Firth smiled complacently.

"Well, my dear, I hope you will be very happy. Mildred is a pretty and a nice girl, although she is not quite your equal, and will have very little money. Do you know, Maurice, I used to fancy, when we were in town last year, that you were attached to Mrs. Hallam."

The young man flushed darkly.

"I was attracted by her, as most men are. The little widow is a charming companion and a lovely woman to boot."

Mrs. Firth passed by his words with superb indifference.

"I had been weaving quite a romance about you," she said, lying back with half-closed eyes. "Vera Hallam is just the sort of wife I hoped you would marry—young, beautiful, and wealthy."

"She loses every penny she possesses if she marries again," Maurice remarked, "and her tastes are extravagant. She is very lovely—that I am willing to admit—but she is an ardent coquette!"

"I am sorry that is your opinion, for I had quite arranged the marriage in my own mind; and—ah! I hope you won't be very angry, Maurice dear, but I have invited her to come down in August, and she has accepted."

The young man looked unfeignedly vexed.

"You should have consulted me first. It is very annoying; and Vera—I mean Mrs. Hallam—is not the sort of woman to find pleasure in the country. Then, too, I shall have to dance attendance upon her to a certain extent, and that alone is rough on a newly-engaged man. I shall wish Vera Hallam at Jericho!"

"But you used to like her so well," weakly remonstrated the lady; and Maurice made no response.

He could not tell her that he had been in danger of loving Vera Hallam "not wisely, but too well;" that he had endured many an hour's pain because of her; and that not until he had seen Mildred a woman, he had left her a girl, was his heartache healed.

Even now he dreaded to meet the little syren, whose charms had made such havoc in his breast.

Some instinct told him she was neither good nor true; but men are apt to forget such trifling details when brought under the direct influence of their brilliant beauty as the young widow boasted.

It was not, however, in Maurice Firth's nature to dwell upon unpleasant topics, and he quickly shook off all memories of Vera, forgetting all but his love for Mildred, which grew with each day, until he himself was amazed by its quiet depth and strength.

Mrs. Firth received the girl very prettily. Her own parents were delighted with the engagement, and congratulations poured in from every side.

As for Maurice, each day he discovered some fresh beauty of mind and character in his fair betrothed, and a reverence he never yet had felt for any other woman marked his manner towards her.

The weather, which had been unusually cold

and wet, had changed with that delightful rapidity customary to the English climate, and it was now so sultry that folks complained quite as bitterly of the heat as they had formerly inveighed against cold and rain; but Mildred revelled in it.

"Maurice," she said, leaning back amongst the hay with half-closed eyes, "this is weather fit for the gods. If only the world were as fair always as it is now, I would be content never to leave it."

"Providing that all things in your life were in unison, sweetheart?"

"That of course; and I would never grow old, I would remain young, loving and beloved; I would keep all my friends about me. Not one dear familiar face should be missing from the circle, and not a cloud should darken any brow."

"You are imagining an earthly Paradise," he said, looking down at her with love in his eyes. "If the world wagged as you wished, death would be a most evil and bitter thing. Now it has no terror for many a poor soul."

A little shadow rested on the brightness of her face.

"To me," she answered, in slow, soft tones, it seems impossible one could weary of life. One must suffer untold agony before one longs for death. Oh, it is good to live and breathe, to feel the blood throbbing through one's veins, to drink in all the beauty around us. Maurice, I thank Heaven every night that the fates have fallen to me in such pleasant places."

He drew down her sweet face and kissed her tenderly.

"Heaven grant, my darling, that never a fault of mine shall make you less content than now."

Softly, yet frankly, her glance met his. "I trust my life into your hands without one fear or doubt. I judge your heart by my own, and I know it cannot fail me."

What sorptions those words would be to him one day—one day! With what bitter shame and sorrow he would recall her look and tone as she uttered them, and wonder over his own mad folly and infatuation. Now, had one told him he could be lured from her side he would have repudiated such a statement with fiercest scorn and rage. He loved her, and she was all the world to him.

With legging feet they trod the fragrant lanes which led to the Hall, loitering to gather the flowers which grew all around in such profusion, stopping by little rustic bridges to look into the shallow depths of the clear, slow-moving stream, and it was certainly half-an-hour later than luncheon was announced that they joined Mrs. Firth.

But that lady did not rebuke them for their tardiness. She was in the highest good humour, babbling over with news, which she was eager to impart.

"Maurice," she said, with her most juvenile air, "you must rejoice with me. Our first visitor arrives to-morrow, and is actually Vera. My dear (turning to Mildred), I want you to know her. She is one of the greatest beauties of the day, and immensely clever. But I suppose Maurice has told you all about Mrs. Hallam?—that is her name. She is a widow, and only twenty-five."

Mildred replied that her lover had not told her anything of his acquaintance.

"Ah! the naughty one," cried Mrs. Firth, with upturned finger, "how like a man to be so secretive. My dear, he was so really fond of her once, and every body expected he would marry her. You are not jealous, Mildred?"

"No, I am not jealous," the girl answered, quietly, although a strange thrill of pain a moment stirred her heart. Her life held but one love; she hoped and prayed that it was so with Maurice.

He was vexed beyond measure at his mother's foolish prattle, and did not scruple to show this, as leaning near to Mildred, he whispered,—

"There is but one girl in the world for me,

my queen, my queen!" and under cover of the table-cloth he gently pressed her hand.

Had not his voice, his touch, power to dispel any fear or doubt she might have entertained? She smiled again, and her eyes were dewy with tears, as to herself she said,—

"Man has but one soul 'tis ordained,
And each soul but one love."

and so she was content.

What did she care that Vera Hallam had such rare beauty that men raved at her, whilst Maurice found her fairer still? Oh! could she envy any woman in all the world whilst she herself held fast the treasure of his love?—when he had chosen her before them all to be his wife, the dear and honoured companion of his life?

CHAPTER II.

VERA HALLAM was standing in the full glow of the lamps when Maurice led Mildred into the drawing-room the next evening; and accustomed as the young man was to her beauty and her brilliancy he could scarcely repress an exclamation of admiration. She looked like some beautiful minute tropical bird, standing there in her crimson silk draperies, veiled by delicate black lace; she was so little that beside her Mildred appeared a tall woman, and but for her dress one might almost have taken her for a child, there was such an innocent expression in the large, soft brown eyes; such a wilful yet wholly fascinating look about the ripe, red lips.

Her hair was black as the raven's wing, her complexion pure olive, with rich colouring in the smoothly rounded cheeks. As she moved a little to meet Maurice the rubies about her throat and wrists flashed and burned like living fire; the liquid, innocent eyes met his with a half-pleading look which irritated him more than he cared to own.

"At last!" she said, in the softest of tones. "Mrs. Firth and I began to despair of your coming, and were getting horribly weary of each other." Then she shot a swift glance at Mildred, and Maurice hastened to introduce his fiancée, to whom the widow was especially gracious.

"When I heard the news of Maurice's engagement, I was so anxious to know you, that I came down sooner than I intended—we are such old, such very old friends, that I am interested in all that concerns him—and now, having seen you, Miss Delorme, I congratulate him, and I hope we shall be good friends too."

The child-like beautiful face smiled, particularly to Mildred; the pretty winning ways won so upon her, that her voice was a trifle stately when she said,—

"I echo your wish, Mrs. Hallam; Maurice's friends are mine."

Vera laughed softly, and with her head turned a little aside, said gaily,—

"What sweet submission is conveyed in your words! Dear Miss Delorme, I wonder will you always so readily accept your lord's will as law! If you do, he will speedily become a most terrible tyrant—remember, I speak from experience;" and then other guests came in, and Vera was led away by a military-looking man, who esteemed himself most fortunate.

Mildred found herself watching the little lady throughout the dinner; she was so bright, so sparkling, it was a pleasure only to look upon her; but she wondered if she had loved her dead husband—surely, she thought in her innocent heart, if she had done so, she could not be so gay.

She did not then know that the beauty had married of her own free will, and at the age of eighteen, an old infirm millionaire, who, dying three years later, had left her sole mistress of his fortune unless she married again. If she had been aware of this, she would not have been so drawn to her; as it was, she was

delighted when later Vera took possession of a seat beside her, saying with all a child's candour,—

"Let us get better acquainted before the men join us. Oh, Miss Delorme, what a relief it is to me to find I am not to depend solely on Mrs. Firth for society. I won't ask you if you find her tedious, for I am sure you do—she bores me inexpressibly. But Maurice—dear delightful Maurice!—I felt I must run down to witness his felicity and congratulate him. We have always been such friends—last season people were stupid enough to connect our names and prophesy marriage for us; it was too ridiculous!" and she laughed as she looked into the sweet face, and serene, beautiful eyes. "Some girls would be jealous of me, but you are of a different mould—"

"I trust Maurice!" Mildred answered, softly, her eyes all aglow with love, "and I hope for his sake you will grow to consider me your friend."

"How kind you are! And all the way down to Dullington I was feeling afraid of you. I am such a stupid little thing; I cannot hide my likes and dislikes, and I like Maurice so very much, that some girls would be furious, but you are the most delightfully truthful of fiancées, and I promise myself a real good time, as the children say, whilst I am here. You will let me come to see you, Miss Delorme? Maurice can bring me, and I will promise to play gooseberry after the most approved fashion."

"Come to-morrow morning," laughed Mildred. "I would like you to see my home, it is so quaint and beautiful, and I can promise you a hearty welcome."

"I shall accept your invite, by the way I asked for it, and you will see me at quite an unfashionably early hour."

Then the men came in, and Mrs. Hallam was surrounded by a small crowd of admirers, all anxious to secure her favour; she was most impartial in the distribution of her smiles and glances, and even Mildred was forced to acknowledge to herself that she was a coquette; but then her coquetry was that of a child, and, being so beautiful, there was small wonder she should delight to show her power over men.

In the morning Vera joined Maurice at breakfast, Mrs. Firth taking her in her own room according to custom; so the beauty presided at table, and Maurice grudgingly allowed that she was, if possible, lovelier seen in early morning than she had been the previous evening; there was such a softness in her large dark eyes, such delicate bloom on the exquisite face, that one found it a hard matter to believe she had been wooed and married and widowed.

She chatted throughout the meal in the most unembarrassed way, until Maurice began to think that she had forgotten one or two somewhat tender scenes which had passed between them, and grew more at ease with her.

But when once en route for Yorick's Farm, her manner changed; something of entreasy came into her eyes, and the flower-like face shadowed.

"Maurice," she said in a low voice, "do you think you have treated me quite fairly?"

"Fairly!" he literally gasped. "What do you mean by that, Vera—Mrs. Hallam?"

"Let it remain Vera between us, we who once were such dear friends," she answered, with down-dropped lids. "Why did you leave town in such a hurry and without one good-bye? Why did you leave it to Mrs. Firth to inform me of your approaching marriage? That was hardly kind, and so not like you."

The young man's face flushed.

"I left town because then I cared for you too much, knowing, as I did, you would never consent to marry me."

"How could you tell that, when you did not even ask me?" she said, swiftly.

"Perhaps I knew by instinct, and you showed me no more favour than you did

others. With regard to your other question, I never supposed that anything in my life would interest you."

"But it did, and it does still. You must believe that, Maurice, and although you have not treated me quite as you should, I wish you all the happiness you can desire for yourself. Mildred Delorme is a pretty girl and a sweet one. You are fortunate to have won so great a prize."

"Yes," he assented, humbly, "I have got more than my deserts," and then, as he swung open the gates of Yorick's Farm, and they entered, Mildred came to meet them with outstretched hands and smiling lips.

They lunched at the farm, and a merry meal it was, but Vera was very quiet throughout the homeward walk. Perhaps she was tired, and the heat of the day made her indolent. And Maurice was thinking of Mildred, although every now and then Vera's words in answer to his speech—"You would never consent to marry me"—crossed his mind to disturb and irritate him. "How could you tell that, when you did not even ask me?"

What did she intend to convey by that speech? Had she loved him all along, and had nothing but his own cowardice stood between them? What it had been, so! He did not desire her now; he had won the best and dearest girl in Christendom, and his life lay all before him radiant with happiness.

Yet often, oh! so often these words occurred to him, though he honestly strove to forget them.

Vera never referred to them, never showed she remembered their utterance, but none the less she was slowly and surely regaining her influence over him.

He hated to feel it was so, he even denied it to himself; but he knew that he lied. There were times when he even hated her, and yet he could not break from her.

A wild unrest possessed him, and gradually his manner grew strange, and sometimes impatient even towards Mildred.

He did not trust Vera, he knew that she promised wife was far beyond her in guile and beauty of heart, and yet, with the weakness and inconsistency of man, he returned to his old idol and clung to her with mad infatuation.

But Mildred never suspected how matters stood. Maurice complained of ill-health; she bore gently and patiently with his varying moods, and, even when his manner hurt her most, hovered about him with fond observances, and would not breathe one word of her trouble even to her dear and honoured parents.

In her gentle heart she invented excuses for him, and believed the excuses she invented, and still confided in and loved the beautiful friend Maurice had given her.

August passed, and still Vera Hallam lingered in Dullington.

"I used to hate the country," she said once, with naïveté, "and country folks; but, Willie, dear, you and yours have made a convert of me; I would like to spend all my life here. I regret that I must soon leave you. I am due at Scarborough next week. It is an old standing invite, and I cannot well decline it. But you will write to me often, nice letters like your own dear self; and although I am a wretched correspondent, I promise to answer you quickly and at length. When I return to town I shall expect you to spend a long, long time with me. Maurice and his mother shall come too, and we will form a small but happy family."

And Mildred, knowing nothing, guessing nothing of Vera's hypocrisy, kissed her warmly, thanking her for her friendship and her kindness, wondering how she could have deserved either.

That night when Maurice paced restlessly to and fro on the lawn Vera joined him. They were not entertaining, and Mrs. Firth had fallen asleep on a couch, so that the girl

pleaded loneliness as an excuse for interrupting his reverie.—

"Which," she added, with a swift glance at his sombre face, "did not seem to be of a pleasant nature."

"It was not," he answered, swiftly. "I was thinking of Mildred."

"What an ungallant remark," retorted his companion. "I can hardly believe the evidence of my own ears," and she waited, with a half-scorning smile for his response.

"I was thinking," Maurice said, heavily, "what a brute I am to her, and how little I deserve her trust. Vera, you don't even guess, perhaps you cannot understand, how good and true she is."

Her face was very pale in the moonlight, her eyes flashed angrily.

"You flatter me," she panted rather than said. "I cannot understand the beauty of goodness and purity! Then I am not a fit companion for your paragon of brides?"

"Vera! hear me, do not distort my words into such hideous meaning. You shall listen," as she moved as though to leave him. "I have made an awful muddle of my life, and I cannot see yet how to get out of it. I am bound by honour to the best and tenderest of girls, and, Heaven forgive me! I am false in spirit if not in deed towards her. If I show her this it will break her heart. If I keep my bond, my life is spoiled!"

"And the other woman—of course there is one—must she suffer because of your scruples and Mildred Delorme's pleasure? Does not she love you?"

"I do not know. I dare not ask. She is the queen of coquettes; and even if she loved me, I must keep my faith to Mildred."

"I see," murmured the soft, mocking voice. "You are like Sir Lancelot in one respect,—

"His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith, unfaithful, kept him falsely true!"

And with those words she left him, flitting like a shadow towards the house.

CHAPTER III.

It was the last night of Vera's stay at the Hall, and a great dinner was to be given in her honour.

Mildred, a little paler and graver than she used to be, dressed slowly and seriously, for she was anxious and oppressed by a sense of overwhelming calamity.

It had been borne at last upon her unsuspecting mind that she was less necessary to Maurice than she had been; and sometimes her heart had failed her when she intercepted his glances towards Vera, heard the tone of his voice when he addressed her.

But then they were such old friends, and it could not be—oh! Heaven forbid—that Maurice could be false. She would trust him even as she had promised to do, for doubt would be more cruel than death.

She went to the Hall under her mother's wing, and Maurice met them with the gentle courtesy which made him such a favourite with women; and yet there was something so distrustful in his manner, that Mrs. Delorme, who, in her love for her child, was quicker to suspect slight and falsehood, watched him carefully.

Mildred was not looking her best; an air of weariness and constraint hung over her, and her eyes were heavy as though with weeping or with thought; and there was Vera smiling and brilliant daintily clad in some fantastic Indian silk of numerous shades.

She looked as though she had never shed a tear in the course of her brilliant life, and Mrs. Delorme, whose liking for her had of late changed to doubt, watched her with hard and angry eyes, and when the ladies repaired to the drawing-room would scarcely vouchsafe her a word.

Still later, when she missed the gay little

figure, and Maurice did not come in with the men, the frown on her brow darkened, and her heart was sore for her darling.

Mildred knew this, and she sickened with the thought that Maurice had to-night persistently avoided her—she had even overheard comments to that effect—and maddened by her grief, she watched her opportunity to escape into the sweet serenity of the September night.

The moon was at the full, and flooded the beautiful grounds with its clear white light, so that every tree and flower stood out into bold relief.

Mildred went quickly until she came to a retired nook, by which ran a narrow path leading to the grottoes, and here she seated herself, and gave way to her bitter thoughts.

The serpent had indeed entered the paradise, and grief was hard to bear, being so new to her.

So sheltered was her chosen spot that one might well pass it without seeing the dark robed figure embowered in clustering ivy.

Certainly the two approaching her never dreamed how near she was; and she set her teeth with a shuddering breath as Maurice's voice smote on her ear.

"I thought, and I think still, Vera, that you were only trifling with me, and I know how mad I am to love you. I do not trust you, but it is my curse to adore you with a mad, unreasoning adoration you can neither understand nor return. Your beauty has stolen away my senses."

"If," said the soft, sweet voice of the little creature beside him, "if any other man had spoken such words to me, I never would have forgiven him! Why do you so distrust me? And when you so hovered about me, yet never said a word of what was in your heart, would you have had me take the initiative? Maurice, it is not too late for happiness yet."

"Hush!" he said, hoarsely. "I have made a mistake, and must bear the consequences of my folly. Do not have it on your conscience that you robbed me of honour as well as of happiness?"

"Then my happiness counts for naught; and for the sake of a foolish scruple you will keep your promise to that pale girl whom now you loathe."

The wretched girl in her hiding place could have shrieked aloud, but not for worlds should these two see her in the first throes of anguish. Maurice was speaking again.

"I do not loathe her; I love and reverence her as some devotee loves and reverences his patron saint; I was a better man while I kept faith with her. Vera, why did you come to change the current of my life, to work out such misery for us both?"

They were standing quite still with the moonlight falling full upon her bare head and uncovered shoulders; the soft brown eyes were uplifted to Maurice's white, stern face,—

"I came," she said, with slow deliberation, "because you belonged to me, and she had stolen you away;" and even in the midst of her anguish Mildred, remembering how this woman had deceived her, wondered how much was false, how much true in her complex nature.

"Maurice! Maurice! You cannot say Mildred Delorme can be to you what I have been, what I am. There is but one course open to you—you must break with her. Mine is the prior claim—can you send me away?"

He looked on the lovely face, so dimpled and childish, the half-sad, half-arch eyes, and stretched out his arms as though to draw her close; but he let them fall slackly to his sides.

"Vera, for the love of Heaven do not tempt me; leave me some semblance of manhood. To-night I have tasted to the very dregs the bitterness of self-scorn. If you love me, you will help me to grasp the last shreds of honour and self-respect fast."

"Love is more than all," she answered, her flashing glance meeting his, "and you know that in turning your back upon it you are

losing the best part of your life. I have stooped to plead with you; I have borne your bitter words in patience—do me the kindness to forget my folly." She moved from him, swiftly, but he, following closely, cried,—

"Vera, my darling! my darling! This is more to me than you can guess;" and then the voices grew fainter, the shrubs hid their figures from Mildred's sight, and she was alone with her despair.

She neither wept nor moaned; there is a grief too deep for tears—only, she rose ever so slowly from her seat, and stood silent and motionless for awhile, with her face all white and distorted. Then the poor white, tremulous hands were lifted high above the fair head as though in mad appeal to Heaven for mercy, and on the stillness of the divine night came the broken cry,—

"Oh, Heaven! oh, Heaven! How shall I bear it? How shall I bear it?"

How sweet life had been to her so short a while ago? She had scarcely dwelt upon the future because the present was so glad. And now it was all over; she had loved and lost, she had trusted and been deceived; then surely death was the only good thing left her. Ah! this dreadful heartache! Would it always be thus, through all the years allotted her to live? Slowly her hands fell, until they covered her anguished eyes, and as she stood there she prayed for strength to bear and courage to hide the blow she had received. Then, like one in a dream, she made her way uncertainly across the level lawns, amongst the flower-beds, pausing only once to say under her breath,—

"Maurice! Maurice! You shall be happy and free even at the cost of my broken heart! Heaven forbid that I should selfishly spoil your life!" A little sob rose to her lips, she resolutely repressed it; this was no time for weakness, she was not the only woman to suffer in silence, and in silence her strength would grow. She reached the house, and, pausing outside, listened to the sound of gay voices and laughter, the softened strains of a popular waltz a young girl was playing; and, as she stood there, one of the guests joined her.

"Miss Delorme, if it were not too impertinent I would ask you what you are doing here. We have all missed you, and Firth looks miserable."

The face turned upon him was very white, but the lips were smiling.

"I came out because my head was aching so badly. I will go in presently, although the beauty of the night might well tempt one to stay out longer!"

"But it is growing cold, and your dress is thin. Let me bring you a wrap."

"Oh, no! no! and indeed I am very warm; but I will go in now."

Her temples ached and throbbed; but she gave no sign either of her physical or mental pain, and throughout the remainder of that terrible night bore herself with a firmness and dignity strange in one so young and so unaccustomed to pain.

No one, save her mother, guessed that things were not quite as they should be with her; but she was wise not to comment upon this until they were alone.

Maurice cloaked her carefully, and stooping took the good-night kiss. She almost screamed aloud. They would stand together no more thus in all the years to come. Oh, cruel! most cruel! She laid her slender, ungloved hand on his; he started at the touch, for the little fingers burned like live coal.

"You are ill!" he said.

"No, only tired; it has been a long evening. Maurice, you will come over to-morrow?"

"That of course, Mildred. It is not often I absent myself from you and the farm."

"But early—quite early, and alone. I have something to say to you," she answered, feverishly, "something of greatest importance," and then as Vera's soft voice sounded close by them, she simply added, "You will not fail me. Good night!" and went away

without returning Mrs. Hallam's gay farewell.

She went down to breakfast at the usual hour, and neither parents commented on her pallor; perhaps they guessed its cause too well, and feared lest any words of theirs should break down her wonderful self-control.

After breakfast she took out her hat and walked towards the gates which separated the garden from the fields; and presently she saw Maurice coming towards her, and waited for him to join her.

She replied quietly to his greeting, and, allowing him to take her hand, went with him to an arbour close by.

"Now," he said, smiling down upon her, "what is this wonderful business upon which you would consult me? Is it of such a serious nature it must be discussed privately and without delay?"

"Do not jest upon it," she said, quickly, whilst one slender hand strayed to her throat and rested there, as though to ease that awful choking sensation which seemed to stay her voice.

"Maurice! oh, Maurice! is death worse than this?"

His face whitened as his eyes met hers so wide with anguish, and he knew in a flash that in some way she had learned the truth. He was so covered with shame, and sorrow for her sorrow, that words failed him, and he stood silent before her. His very weakness gave her strength, and she went on, wearily,—

"I do not blame you, dear. She—Vera Hallam—is very beautiful, and if she can make you happy, Heaven forbid that I should stand between you, or spoil the life I hoped to make so glad. I heard you. I saw you together last night. I did not mean to listen, and yet I am thankful that a chance was given me to know the truth before it was too late. I—oh! Maurice, why do you look at me so strangely? You are free, quite free. I am hurt a little now, but I shall not suffer long; and then her white hands went up to hide her poor white face, and with a shudder she heard his voice break the momentary silence.

"I dare not ask you yet for forgiveness, Mildred, and yet in time I hope you will accord me that grace, and let me be to you what I have been. I am wholly unworthy you, but, as Heaven is my witness, I never thought I could have sunk as low as this. I never dreamed I should be the first to bring trouble to you. It is true I love Vera Hallam—I loved her long ago—but I cannot take my freedom. Let us together forget my madness; I will do my best to make you happy."

Her mournful eyes met his fully then. "Happy! with such knowledge as we possess standing always between us. Ah! Maurice, you deceive neither yourself nor me. You loved her first—you are hers by right—let her take her own. In a little while we will meet again as friends, but not lovers any more. It is better so, and Heaven will help me to bear my pain."

As he looked on that sweet, white face, so full of tenderness and self-abnegation, he realised how much he was losing; saw for the first time all the beauty of the pure soul shining in the deep eyes, and hesitated.

Could Vera ever be to him what this girl might have been? And then he thought of her dark loveliness, her winsome ways, and the old glamour was upon him, although he still made an effort to resist it.

"Tell me truly, Mildred, if I promise by all that I hold sacred, neither to see nor to speak to Mrs. Hallam again, will you still adhere to your decision?"

"Yes. You do not love me any more. I cannot be your wife—only your friend."

He lifted her hand to his lips.

"You are an angel," he said, "and all my life long I shall have myself that I was such a scoundrel to you."

"No," she said, gently, "not that. You were only mistaken with regard to your feelings concerning me. And now go, and in going remember you are free."

Was he glad or sorry as he turned to obey? He hardly knew, his mind was in such a chaos; and having watched him through the length of the first field, Mildred went slowly to the house in search of her mother, whom she found sewing in the breakfast-room.

Without a tremor in her voice, she said,—
"Mother, I have been talking to Maurice, and he agrees with me that our engagement has been a mistake. He is going to marry Mrs. Hallam."

Her quiet manner, her tearless eyes, could not deceive Mrs. Delorme. She knew too well the strength and depth of her child's nature.

With a cry full of pity and pain she stretched out her arms to Mildred, who, suddenly eluding on her knees, hid her face in her mother's skirts, and remained so until the paroxysm of pain had passed.

And Maurice, retracing his steps, hated and cursed himself for his falsehood, which seemed the blacker to him with the light of Mildred's words shed upon it.

"I trust my life into your hands without one fear or doubt; I judge your heart by my own, and I know it cannot fail me."

Alas! alas! how had he rewarded that love and trust? Was there a man on earth more despicable than he? And torturing himself thus, he went in to Vera's presence, a gloomy sinner indeed.

"Well?" she said, glancing quickly up, "have you seen Miss Delorme?"

"I have, and she has given me my freedom. Vera, will you marry me?"

The colour flushed her cheeks.

"Are you sure, quite sure you are speaking truth?"

"I am as sure of that as that I am a black-guard," he answered, moodily. "I cannot tell you now what she said, or how she looked; I only know I wish she had some one to punish me as I deserve."

"You are hardly complimentary to me, and—and you forget I love you, Maurice."

CHAPTER IV.

"I do not forget that, seeing that your love must stand me in lieu of my lost honour. Vera, when will you marry me?"

She was silent a moment, sitting with downcast eyes and thoughtful face; then laying gentle hands in his, she said,—

"Not yet, not quite yet, Maurice; it would seem such wanton cruelty to Mildred Delorme, and the world would cry shame on us for our indecent haste. Then, too, I should not like to be pointed out as the woman for whose sake you jilted your sweetheart, because in a case like this the poor woman has always to bear the blame. But you may join me at Scarborough, and then we will arrange everything definitely. Won't that plan satisfy you, dear?"

"I suppose it must. I suppose, too, that you know best how to act under our peculiar circumstances; and not for worlds would I put another alight upon Mildred. Of course I cannot stay here at present to risk the chance of meeting her at every turn. I shall go down to Venables at Gloucester."

Vera was angry that even now he thought so much of her hapless rival, and that his manner was so disturbed; but she gave no hint of her real feeling, as with her head upon his shoulder she looked with soft eyes into his, and listened whilst he made his plans.

"Vera," he said, in conclusion, "you are sure that you love me well enough to give up your fortune for my sake? My darling! my darling! You can never guess all that you are to me, or what a wreck any falsehood on your part would make of my life."

"If I did not love you," she answered, gently, "should I have promised to be your wife, seeing how much I love? My love! my love! why do you doubt me?"

"I don't doubt you. If I did I had better be dead, for you are my life!" and then he kissed her madly, for a while forgetting Mildred with her pale face and deep anguished eyes.

Vera was so loving and so kind, freer with her favours than ever Miss Delorme had been, and, man like, he believed then she loved him better than the pale girl who had so nobly given him his freedom.

She went to Scarborough the following day, and Maurice left Dallington for Gloucester. His journey was not a happy one, for he was haunted by Mildred's memory. There had been, there still would be, moments when, succumbing to Vera's witcheries, he would forget her; but never for long.

Again and again her pale sweet face would rise before him; and although wildly, restlessly happy in his fiancée's love, when alone doubts of her utter truth, hate of his own falsehood, would render his hours miserable.

She wrote him frequently letters so full of love that he had been a Didymus indeed longer to distrust her, and he told himself fondly that a happy future lay before him—if only he could forget Mildred! But she stood like a ghost between him and perfect joy.

Towards the close of September he went to Scarborough, where Vera met him with all the observances of love; but he was irritated and annoyed to find her time so fully occupied that she had little leisure to accord him those *l'êtes à l'êtes* to which he had looked so longingly forward.

She had suitors, too, in plenty, and seeing this he begged her to allow the public announcement of their engagement; but always she urged, "Consider poor Mildred," and that was the most forcible plea she could urge.

Among the men who hovered about her was Lord Hallier, a well-preserved man of forty, whose title was not his only possession, and of him Maurice was extravagantly jealous. But his little fiancée laughed him to scorn when he confessed this.

"Why, he is an old man, you stupid boy," she said.

"Not so old as Augustus Hallam when you married him!"

"Ah! but that was against my will, without my consent. It is you only I love, dear Maurice, and you must learn to trust me, or we never can be happy."

"You are so beautiful," he said, miserably, "so courted and flattered, that I never shall have rest or peace until I can call you wife!"

"I love you," she answered, moved beyond her wont, "no one beside yourself could touch my heart. And now I will be very good to you, although you do not quite deserve any kindness, you jealous boy. At the commencement of the new season you shall make known your right of proprietorship, and claim me when you will!"

He was but half content, and questioned, gloomily,—

"In the meanwhile what am I to do?"

"Oh! there are a hundred and one things a man can do to pass the time quickly and pleasantly. You might travel; and, by-the-way, I ought to tell you I have let my town house, and am going to the Riviera with Mrs. Thorpe. It will be better for all parties concerned, and will prevent all scandal. How glum you look!"

"I was wondering when I should see you again after you leave here?"

"Why, in February at the latest; and we can correspond daily if you wish it, dear."

"You propose leaving me for five months. You are quite willing to suffer separation?"

"Not willing; but I consider that this is the only course open to us, for the sake of the world's opinion, and in memory of that noble girl who has given us to each other. And then," coquettishly, "I would perhaps test your love by absence. You forget me once, you might again, and I can only be happy when sure of your heart!"

She looked so beautiful standing there in her

glittering firs and jewels, that he cried, passionately,—

"Look into my eyes and doubt me if you can! I love you! love you! love you! with all my soul and strength. Be kind to me, dear heart!"

"I am kind," she whispered, "and you are very exacting with your poor little girl! You do not understand, Maurice, how often your doubts and jealousies render me wretched."

And then, of course, he was all contrition, and raised no further objections to her plans; but he was rather staggered when he learned casually that Lord Hillier formed one of Mrs. Thorpe's party, and wrote to Vera on the subject.

Her tender and apparently guileless reply lulled his doubts, and he despised himself that he could be so suspicious of the woman he should one day make his wife.

He spent the time of probation in wandering from place to place. Stay at Dallington he could not, when every familiar scene reminded him of his treachery, and of the happy, peaceful hours he had spent with Mildred; of whom he now heard nothing. For Mrs. Firth had also gone abroad, and from her he seldom heard.

So the time slipped by, until a new season began, and Vera wrote that she was returning; that she would be glad indeed if he would call upon her as soon as possible after her arrival in town, where she would take up quarters with Mrs. Thorpe until her marriage; and he waited impatiently for her coming.

The day before her arrival he went to Dallington to secure the jewels every bride of his race had worn, and he carried these to town with a proud sense that they were worthy even of Vera.

It was too early yet to call upon her, so he strolled into a café for some slight refreshment; there, heedlessly glancing down the columns of a society paper, his eyes were arrested by the following announcement:

"We understand a marriage has been arranged between Lord Hillier and Mrs. Vera Hallam, the young and lovely widow of Mr. Augustus Hallam, the great railway contractor. By her second union the lady loses the whole of her late consort's vast fortune; but Lord Hillier is a rich man, and can well afford to dispense with a bride's dowry."

Maurice read those few lines again and again in a state of stupefaction; then he caught up his hat, and, mad with rage and pain, went hurriedly to visit Vera.

A pompous footman admitted him, ushering him into the daintiest of rooms, where he waited an unconsovable time for Mrs. Hallam's coming.

But at length he heard the swish of her skirts, and looking up saw her standing, pale and beautiful, in the open doorway. Advancing, he took her by the hand, and closing the door, asked abruptly,—

"Vera, is it true you marry Hillier?"

She looked at him with half-frightened eyes; in this mood she did not know him.

"You must not be angry," she pleaded, her infantile features all convulsed with fear and the pain which was so new to her. "I meant to be true, I did indeed; but when I saw what I must lose by marrying you, I—I began to think it would be far better to marry Lord Hillier. I am not fit to be any but a rich man's wife, Maurice, don't look like that. I do love you! oh, indeed I do!"

But he interrupted quickly.

"Do not take love's name upon your lips; it is desecration. Oh, woman! oh, woman! what possessed you to make havoc of our lives?"

"It was because you were more to me than any other. I did not dream how hard it would be to part from you; but I knew from the first we never could join hands. Only I wanted a little happiness before we said good-bye, and I was angry that Mildred Deforme, a pale, quiet country girl, should wrest you from me. My pride and my love would not submit to such a slight. See, I speak to you

now without concealment! And I vowed I would win your heart again; you know best if I have done so. I never meant to let you go, unless some very eligible suitor presented himself. Maurice! Maurice! if you were but rich!"

"I thank Heaven I am not," he retorted, roughly, "or I should have won my wife by my wealth! Oh, you need not look so scared; I am not going to reproach you, or to make known your duplicity to Hillier. It is enough for me that you are false."

He turned as if to go, but she clung weeping to him. She loved him just then too well to part coldly from him.

"You must not leave me so. It is a cruel fate that stands between us, but I love you."

"A little less than rask or little," he answered, unloosing her clinging hands. "Well, you have made your choice, and I shall not complain. Indeed, I have no right to reproach you, having played the traitor myself for your sake. You are beautiful enough to win any man's heart, I hardly wonder that Hillier should covet what I found fair; and I wish you happiness. Women like you do not suffer long, wealth and position are all in all to them."

"You won't see how cruelly I am placed," Vera cried, pensively. "I have lived in luxury too long to be content with the mere necessities of life. Wish me good-bye as one you have loved; you must not leave me in anger."

"Not in anger," he answered, heavily, "but in contempt of myself. I was a blind fool to trust my life into your hands; I was a scoundrel to betray a good woman's faith, and, deserving my fate, I will accept it without a murmur."

He put her gently aside and went out, and Vera flung herself upon a couch, crying in impotent rage.

"He despises me too much to hate me! He will go back to her and she will forgive him! Why, why was I fool enough ever to lose my heart to him?"

Maurice scarcely knew how the few weeks following that interview passed; everyone around him spoke of the coming marriage which was to be quite the event of the season, he was glad that so few knew of his infatuation. Vera herself had written him, declaring solemnly she had never meant to deceive him; but that on the night previous to her return to England, Lord Hillier had proposed marriage, and that she, dazzled by the splendid future her imagination conjured up, had accepted him.

It was better so; she was unfitted for a quiet life, and he would soon forget. For the rest, she craved his mercy and forgiveness.

The letter was incriminating; if it fell into the hands of an unscrupulous person it might make terrible trouble between Lord and Lady Hillier, so he destroyed it: the woman he had once loved, or fancied he loved, should not suffer through him, even though she had wronged him and one other grievously.

A little later Vera was married; and then, a very madness of self-scorn, hatred and outraged love possessing him, Maurice plunged into every excess, until his solicitor, growing alarmed by his extravagant expenditure, recalled him to a sense of his condition, and remonstrated with him so severely upon his folly, that the young man was heartily ashamed, and, facing his difficulties, determined to meet them as became one of his honest race.

It was strange how often his thoughts reverted to Mildred; what a deep, insatiable longing he had to see her once again. He began to realise now how much he had lost, and in his heart of hearts he knew that the love he had borne her had never died out; that it was an terrible passion he had cherished for Vera Hallam, and to himself he said,—

"I will go to Mildred, and tell her all the truth. She is merciful as well as good; per-

haps in time she will not only forgive, but make me happy once again.

Like the prodigal he went back to his home, to find Mrs. Firth in tears over Vera's wickedness; lamenting too over the folly which had made him jilt so sweet a girl as Mildred Deforme; it was hard that the nicest place in Dallington should be closed to her because of his fickleness. He heard her, through with a weary sigh, then he set out for Yorkick Farm, and at the gate where long ago—oh! so long ago it seemed they had parted—began Mildred. She heard his step, she would have known it among a thousand, and her face was white as marble as she confronted him. She could not speak, she seemed frozen where she stood, and he in an agony of remorse stretched out longing hands to her.

"Mildred, I have come back to you. I cannot live without you!" he said, brokenly.

A slow-gathering scorn darkened her eyes. "You have forgotten Vera," she answered, quietly, "and yet you vowed to me you loved her above and beyond all the world can give."

"She deserted me; she has been some time married, as you perhaps know," to Lord Hillier; he was a much more eligible party than I; in the world's eyes she chose wisely. Mildred, Mildred! you were always kind, do not send me away in anger now that I have seen my folly and discovered my utter need of you."

Her face was pitiful, but it showed no least sign of granting his prayer. Still and erect she stood, and when he met her glance he knew what her reply must be.

"You need me now," she said, ever so softly, "when your heart is heavy with the pain of her rejection; but you will not need me long. Twice you sought her, twice you have honoured me by wishing to make me your wife; and in time you will forget us both and be happy with some other woman. Maurice! Maurice! I love you with all my soul, I shall do so until I die, but such a love as yours, my stronger heart disdains," and so good-bye, and Heaven bless you and make your life bright again—we can only part."

"This is your final answer?"

She bowed her head; perhaps she could not speak.

CHAPTER V.

He went to Scotland for awhile to recruit his health, and lay plans for the future. He wanted work, in that only lay his salvation. So he turned his attention to politics; and after awhile he began to take to real and thorough an interest in them that older men said "he would make his mark."

He never knew until long, long afterwards how Mildred followed all his movements through the medium of the papers, how she glowed in his successes, how she shared his triumphs with him, and how often the fair head was bowed in prayer for him.

He hardly dared think of her at all; for he knew that in all his life he had loved but one woman, and that woman he had wronged.

He yearned for her as the dying yearn for a sight of their native land.

Deep down in his heart, all unacknowledged even to himself, there lived a spark of hope, that when years had passed, when fame and wealth alike were his, he would go to Mildred and find her waiting for him—always loving him, and now trusting him again—and they two would be happy together.

When more than a year had gone he met Lady Hillier at a promenade concert. She was looking especially beautiful in a dainty heliotrope costume, and with the little imperious gesture he so well remembered, she motioned him to her side.

"Have you heard the news?" she questioned when, with ill-concealed reluctance, he joined her. "If not, I am going to interest you. It concerns the Deformes."

He started, and his colour changed, though ever so slightly.

Vera saw it with a throb of anger; but she was too much of a woman of the world to show this, so she went on, with just the proper amount of sympathy in her voice, just the correct expression of regret upon her lovely face,—

"I am so sorry for Mrs. Delorme and poor Mildred. I heard, quite accidentally to-day, that Mr. Delorme is dead—the effects of a sunstroke; and it seems he has not left his widow in very good circumstances. The farm is heavily mortgaged. It is very hard."

He stood looking down upon her with troubled eyes.

"It is very hard," he echoed, absently; "they were such a happy family, and Mildred was devoted to her father."

Then, before Vera could say more, some friends joined them, and presently Maurice contrived to escape.

"Mildred was in trouble." That was the one thought possessing him; she was in trouble, and he had not the right to go to her to offer her the least crumb of comfort. In his utter shame at his own inconstancy, he dared not so much as send her a message of condolence; for, coming from him, that would seem an insult to her. Mildred! my Mildred! he said again and again, "you are avenged. I wonder, dear heart, if you have forgotten?—if you quite hate the memory of me? Poor child! in trouble—in poverty! What will you do with no one near to help you?"

Three months later a letter reached him from his mother, which only added to his burden of anxiety.

She was not generally a very luminous correspondent; but now she wrote at length, underlining many words and sentences.

After telling him of her numerous fancied ailments, upon which she expatiated pathetically, she went on to say:—

"And now for some very sad news. It is only three months since poor Mr. Delorme died, and yesterday his widow was buried. Some people say his loss broke her heart, but I understand she had some kind of fever; and as I have a nervous horror of anything contagious, and am myself so very, very far from well, I did not venture to call on Mildred; but I sent Fyson daily to inquire."

"It is cruelly hard upon Mildred, of course; but all things considered, it is fortunate that your engagement was cancelled, as she has scarcely anything of her own."

"The farm, you see, is heavily mortgaged; and when the yearly interest is paid, it is already let to some nice people named Frampton, there will be hardly anything left for Mildred."

"In passing, let me remark she did not even call to wish me good bye, which I consider a very great slight. I do not know where she has gone. Some say she has accepted a situation as companion, others she has been adopted by one of her mother's relatives—a certain Mrs. Foster—who has been in Dullington for several days."

"Mrs. Foster is reported to be rich, but one cannot trust reports. Some say she is the widow of that Professor Foster who spent half his life exploring Africa—that she has immense social influence; and if this is true, Mildred is a lucky girl."

"Will you make inquiries for me concerning Mrs. Foster? If she is a fit person to cultivate, I should be pleased to make her acquaintance, as I then could have access to that poor orphaned girl."

Then followed a long and tedious account of the misconduct or clumsiness of the various domestics, which it is hardly necessary to say Maurice did not read.

All his mind was occupied by the thought of Mildred's lonely condition. Where had she hidden herself and her sorrows?

What a blind fool he had been. If only he had known his own heart, she might even now be safely sheltered in his love.

"Heaven help her!" he cried in his anguish

of grief for her, "and Heaven help me to find her and make her mine."

But Mildred was not destitute, not unloved. Mrs. Foster, her mother's cousin, had been pleased by the girl's grace and beauty, won by her devotion to Mrs. Delorme, and, taking her under her own care, quickly grew to love her, as she might have loved the child Heaven had seen good to deny her.

Mrs. Foster had few pleasant associations with her native land, and she believed that in change of scene and travel her young relative would more quickly forget her many trials. So she took her abroad, and found delight in showing the girl all the wonders and beauties of foreign lands; and in this wise another year slipped by. Then Mrs. Foster suggested return to England.

"I have been selfish," she said, "to keep you so much apart from a world all young people love. We will spend the season in town. It will be such a complete change for you; and although Mildred protested she liked best their quiet mode of life, her cousin would not listen."

She took a flat at Kensington, and quickly gathered a bright circle about her. She had, too, the satisfaction of seeing Mildred admired and courted.

If the girl had been beautiful in the old days, she was doubly so now, with just that tender tint of melancholy in her lovely eyes, just that touch of gentle dignity on her face and in her manner.

She was not without suitors, the foremost being a young and rich American named Cawthrop; but if she knew that he regarded her with a warmer feeling than friendship she gave no sign, and Mrs. Foster, who knew the story of her broken engagement, said again and again to herself,—

"It is of no use to lay siege to her heart, she has loved once and for all time. She will go down to her grave faithful to the man who robbed her life of its brightness."

Mildred was glad she did not meet Lady Hillier throughout that season. The two moved in distinct circles, and the former heard little of the other's actions.

But Lady Hillier had discovered that the Miss Delorme who was making quite a stir in the fashionable world, by her grace and beauty, was none other than the little country girl whose life she had crossed only to darken it.

She grew bitterly jealous of her social triumphs, and determined to assure herself that the reports of her beauty were not exaggerated; but she was not sufficiently acquainted with any of Mrs. Foster's circle of friends to ask the favour of an introduction to the Kensington flat.

For one thing she was profoundly thankful, Maurice and Mildred had not met, she had not recaptured him; and she smiled to herself as she thought,—

"I only had his heart. He will love no other woman as he loved me."

It was true he held aloof from her; but she understood by this that he was afraid to trust himself in her presence, lest the old glamour should again overpower him. There was no shaking her vanity.

It was about this time that she met young Cawthrop at the house of a mutual friend, and finding that he knew Mildred, she adroitly led the conversation towards her.

Cawthrop was nothing loth to speak of his divinity, and Lady Hillier was so gracious, so pleased to listen, that he talked on and on, being vastly impressed by her beauty and her kindness.

She never said she knew Mildred, that was not a part of her plan; but she was so interested in "this new beauty" that Cawthrop liked to tell her about the girl's doings, and he became a frequent visitor at "my lady's."

The season was fast wearing to a close, and Cawthrop, who was the lucky owner of a magnificent yacht, had invited Mrs. Foster

and Mildred to share a cruise upon which he was intent.

"I shall have her (Mildred) almost to myself," he thought, "it will be odd if I cannot win her in the end. She does not seem to favour any other fellow; and, by Jove! I love her with all my soul!"

He was overjoyed when Mrs. Foster accepted the invitation, and begged her to name the places at which they should touch. This she refused to do, saying,—

"No, no, these things should be left to you; but if you would, I should like before our return to see something of the coast of Brittany."

Oddly enough Maurice himself had gone thither. He loved the grand, rugged coast and simple people; but he little thought that when he made his choice of a holiday resort he was working out his fate and Mildred's.

CHAPTER VI.

MILDRED was unfeignedly startled and annoyed when she learned that Lady Hillier was to form one of their company. Of course she could make no remonstrance.

She was far too proud to confess even to her cousin that this little, lovely woman had wrought such havoc in her life, so that Mrs. Foster was a trifle vexed by the cold manner in which she replied to the other's advances.

"Dear Milly, it is an age since we met. I hadn't the faintest idea that you were the Miss Delorme of whom Mr. Cawthrop spoke so often, or I should have flown to meet you. Mrs. Foster, you have no idea what great friends Milly and I were in the dear old days at Dullington. Shall I ever forget the quaint, lovely house and the welcome which always waited me there? Sit down by me, Milly, and let us gossip over those old times."

Mildred was very pale and stern as she made answer,—

"You forget, Lady Hillier, I have since then lost those who made my home glad."

"Oh, I am so sorry. I had forgotten; you will try to forgive my thoughtlessness?" and then, to her relief, another acquaintance found them, inquiring for Lord Hillier, and expressing a hope to meet him at their next landing stage.

Vera laughingly shrugged her shoulders, rumour said she and her lord did not wear the matrimonial yoke well, and answered carelessly—

"Oh, Dawlish has gone into Yorkshire, where he expects to have a very good time; and for me, I cannot take an interest in agriculture, or the rearing of sheep and pigs. Then, too, the honeymoon has so long passed, and like sensible people we have each determined to go our own way. It is infinitely more agreeable."

"I believe a great many married people are of your opinion," said Mrs. Foster, dryly.

"Yes; I should hate to be in the minority," with a laugh that showed all her pleasing little teeth, "and really I never was an advocate for sentiment. It is apt to pull upon one; and there is something positively nauseous to me in the public endearments of some husbands and wives."

Despite Vera's constant presence, Mildred found the cruise most enjoyable; she was a splendid sailor and suffered none of the ordinary discomforts which wait on even experienced travellers.

But the third morning proved rough. A strong wind had sprung up from the east, and the waves lashed heavily against the sides of the vessel, and they were now off the dangerous coast of Brittany.

All the ladies had gone below save Mildred, to whom the spectacle was as grand and delightful as it was new. And as she stood, her hair blown loose about her shoulders, her face flushed and her eyes bright, Cawthrop joined her. He was looking very anxious.

"What is it?" she asked. "Do you fear a storm is blowing up?"

"That is just precisely what I am afraid of. With so many women on board it would be terrible. We are trying to put in, but the wind is dead against us, and the shore is not only dangerous but almost inaccessible. Still, we will hope for the best; the elements may be kind after all."

But in a little while the wind had increased to a hurricane, the waves broke over the sides of the yacht, and even Mildred was forced below, where some of the women were crying and wringing their hands. Vera white as death, was huddled in a corner, her eyes full of agonising fear. Mildred took her place by her cousin. She was pale and quiet, and bore herself as became the daughter of her country.

Higher and higher rose the storm. In the Breton village hard by, perched like a bird upon the rugged rocks, the simple people shook their heads as they looked towards the sea.

"Now," said one woman, "may the Holy Mother have mercy! Son yonder is a vessel—ah! *mon Dieu*, she is driving on to the rocks!"

Then said the old priest, solemnly—

"My children, let us pray," and by common consent the women and children followed him to the little chapel; but the men went down to the cliffs, and with them went Maurice.

Could nothing be done to succour those on board? Must all perish miserably within sight of shore? The peasants shook their heads. Such a thing as a life-boat was unknown to them save by name; and what small craft could live in such a sea?

With a swiftness which well might take one's breath away, the wind veered round, driving the yacht before it as though it were but a toy.

"If the worst comes they will be nearer help," said one man. Then a quick cry shuddered through them, "Holy Mother! she's struck! she's doomed!"

So near was the yacht now that all could see she must go to pieces soon; and on the deck were women, who cried aloud for help, so that the sound of their agonised entreaties rose above all the roaring of wind and waves.

"Will no one volunteer to join me?" Maurice asked, passionately. "Are all those poor souls to perish without an attempt to save them?"

Then a gigantic fellow stepped out.

"I'll go with you, but I fear 'tis vain. My poor little boat will hardly reach the rocks."

Others followed his example, but Maurice said—

"We will risk as few lives as possible. Two can manage the boat when once it has been launched. Give us what ropes you have, and let us go in the name of Heaven."

The difficulty in launching the fisherman's boat was terrible, but they succeeded at last, and those on shore watched with bated breath whilst it fought its way through the churning waves, one moment out high, the next almost engulfed in the awful depths.

Once when Maurice lifted his eyes from his oars he saw a slim, *svelte* figure standing quietly on deck, as though all this passion of fear and pain had failed to touch her. At her feet crouched another, clinging to her with frantic hands and face hidden in her skirts; and even in the midst of his toil and terrible anxiety a thrill of admiration stirred him for the girl who could meet her fate with such outward calm.

What a shout went up when the boat reached the doomed yacht. Then as one of their gallant rescuers reached the deck Mildred gave a low drawn, shivering sigh; for she looked once more on the face of Maurice!

In that instant their eyes met, and he was scarcely surprised to recognise his old love in that brave and steadfast girl. He went to her side.

"The boat will carry only five passengers," he said. "Come, Mildred!" whilst the woman at her feet shrieked—

"Save me! oh, save me! I dare not die!"

The grave sweet eyes met his gently.

"It is Vera," she said, "for the love you bore her, let her take my place!"

But he still held his hand to her. She steadfastly refused to take it.

"Come," he said again, "there is no time for delay. It is you I love, you for whom I would give my life!"

But she, half-raising Vera, cried to her to look up, for Maurice had come to save her, and thrusting her into his reluctant arms, said—

"Go; every moment you stay but adds to your danger."

Without a reply he lifted Vera forcibly. Oh! what cruel fate had brought these two women together at such a crisis? Why must he save the one he so despised and leave the other to a cruel death? He would not go and leave her thus. If she must die, it should be in his arms, held close to his heart.

With utmost difficulty Vera, who had fainted, was lowered into the boat, where Mrs. Foster and three others were already seated; then Maurice spoke a few words to the young American. When he turned again to look at Mildred she was standing with her head bowed in prayer. He spoke her name. She looked up, and a spasm of pain crossed her face.

"Why are you here?" she asked, and each was forgetful of the presence of the others.

"Because I love you. I have always loved you. If I may not live for you, I can at least die with you. Your friend has gone in my stead."

She wrung her hands in her agony for him. "Heaven keep you safe!" she cried. "Oh! why, why have you dared so much for me?"

"I have told you, and you will believe me now. One does not lie with death staring one in the face."

"I believe you," she said, solemnly as he had spoken, and lifted her lips to his.

"I shall die content."

Then, as her eyes followed the poor little boat, she gave a deep breath of satisfaction.

"They have all but reached the shore. The men have rushed into the surf to draw them in. Maurice, thank Heaven, they are safe!"

And even as she spoke, a spar, snapped by the violence of the storm, fell crashing down upon her head, and but that Maurice held her fast she must have fallen, and so have been swept overboard, for with the pain of the blow she had swooned.

When all hope of rescue had been given up, whilst Mrs. Foster, with hidden face, lamented bitterly, and Mr. Cawthorp cursed himself that he could have been persuaded to leave the girl he loved behind, the priest's housekeeper flung the door wide, and Maurice staggered in, carrying Mildred like a child.

He was exhausted by previous exertions, but no arms save his should bear that beloved burden. Placing the inert body upon a couch, he dropped breathless into a chair, whilst the women, crowding round, asked many questions; but the priest, with greater wisdom, poured out brandy, and tendered it to the hero of the hour with words of praise and admiration.

"There is no credit due to me," Maurice said, humbly; "but for those good fellows she and I would now be floating far out to sea. They worked as I never saw men work before."

They carried the unconscious girl upstairs, and the village doctor, arriving on the scene, quickly cleared the room of all save Mrs. Foster and Margot, the ancient housekeeper.

"Mamzelle will a hard struggle have," he said in his imperfect English, "it may be that she shall die; but it is my best for her I will do."

He was unfeignedly relieved when he found Maurice, who was not in the least hurt by his adventure, could speak French fluently.

"I will tell you how it stands," he said, eagerly; "she seems not strongly physically, and the blow she received, added to the strain her nerves supported so long, have together

brought her very low. She will need all the care that can be given. Being young, she may recover; but I will not say to you be sanguine—but prepare for the worst."

Maurice's heart died within him. Must he lose her now when most he loved her, when she was ready once more to trust him, once more to make trial of his truth? Better they had died together than this should be, for what was life without her?

For seven heartbreaking days they watched beside her, for indeed her life hung as if it were by a single thread; and then the great change came.

She opened her eyes to find herself lying in the best room the priest's house afforded; and Mrs. Foster, worn and anxious, was seated beside her. When Mildred moved, she bent solicitously over her.

"Thank Heaven," she said, tears of gratitude and love in her tired eyes, "you are saved to us!"

The girl put up one hand to her brow.

"Have I been long ill? How did I come here?"

"You have been unconscious in this house a whole week. It is seven days since that dreadful time," shuddering, "and we have feared all along that you would die!"

"Ah! I remember all now. How was I saved? And there were other people on the deck beside Maurice and myself—where are they? Were they too rescued?"

"My dear, yes, and as by a miracle; but I will explain fully when you are able to listen without harm to yourself. Now take your medicine, and when you are stronger, you shall see Maurice."

"Is he here?" Mildred questioned, the slow colour stealing into her pale cheeks.

"My dear, he says he has a right to stay. All the others have gone home. Now you shall talk no more," and smooching the pillows beneath Mildred's head, Mrs. Foster stole away to tell Maurice the good news, whilst kind old Margot stood by crying for sheer sympathy.

Maurice found Mildred sitting up in her white bed, a soft blue wrapper thrown about her. Mrs. Foster had stolen away, and these two were alone together, so that heart might speak to heart, and all the long hunger of weary months and years be appeased. The girl put out one slender hand to meet her lover's.

"Maurice, you have come at last," she said, her sweet voice all faint and shaken.

He took her hand, and kneeling by the bed brought his face to the level of hers.

"Darling! my darling! long months ago I would have returned, but I did not know or guess where you had strayed. I found out my mistake long ago, so long ago it seems like centuries to me, because of all the waiting and the pain; because of my own self-scorn and bitter, vain regrets. Lay your cheek to mine, sweetheart—so!—and listen. You have been the one love of my life. What I falsely called love for her, was the wild passion of reckless manhood; even when most I succumbed to it, I knew it had only a debasing influence upon me. Oh, my dear, my dear, since I came to the full knowledge of my own utter folly, since I realised what a heart of gold I had cast aside, I have striven with all my might to make myself a little worthier you, a little more deserving the love you once gave me—which I hope and pray you give me again. Mildred, will you trust me and try me again?"

Her soft eyes shone through a mist of happy tears as she leaned nearer, her face half hidden in the short, falling curls.

"You would have given your life for mine; when danger looked you in the face, you would not leave my side; and now, if you can, forgive what was harsh and unwomanly in my conduct when I bade you go—when I would not trust one word you said—that night

by the gate, you remember. I desire nothing so much as to—"

"As to?" he repeated, questioningly, as her voice faltered and broke. "Will you say dear heart, you desire nothing so much as to be my very own? Do you mean it?" and as he held her face between his palms, he read her answer there, and, kissing her in a very madness of joy, prayed Heaven to make him worthy of the priceless treasure of a true woman's heart.

THE END.

THERE'S A BOY IN THE HOUSE.

A GUN in the parlour, a kite in the hall,
In the kitchen a book, and a bat and a ball,
On the sideboard a ship, on the bookcase a flute,

And a hat for whose ownership none could dispute;
And out on the porch, gallantly prancing nowhere,

A spirited hobby-horse paws at the air;
And a well-polished pie plate out there on the shelf,

Near the tall jell-jar which a mischievous elf
Emptied as nily and elick as a mouse,

Make it easy to see there's a boy in the house.

A racket, a rattle, a rollicking shout;
Above and below and around and about;
A whistling, a pounding, a hammering of nails,

A building of houses, the shaping of sails,
Entreaties for paper, for scissors, for string,
For every unflinching, bothersome thing;
A bang of the door, a dash up the stairs;
In the interest of burdensome business affairs;

And an elephant hunt for a bit of a mouse,
Make it easy to hear there's a boy in the house.

But, oh, if the toys were not scattered about,
And the house never echoed to racket and rout,

If for ever the rooms were all tidy and neat,
And one need not wipe after wet, muddy feet;
If no one laughed out if the morning was red,
And with kisses went tumbling all tired to bed;

What a wearisome, work-a-day world, don't you see,
For all who love little wild laddies 'twould be?

And I'm happy to think, though I shrink like a mouse,
From disorder and din, there's a boy in the house.

AN EVIL DEED.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GAYLER ASLEEP.

Now was her chance. Lightly she sped across the room, and, kneeling down by the sofa, laid her cool lips on those other burning ones, feeling the little pencil-case dexterously slipped into her hand as she did so.

"What are you doing?" called out Mrs. Bartram, angrily.

"Only kissing my mother before I go," said Barbara, innocently.

"Yes, and waking her up. I'll be bound, just when I can't stay with her!" was the grumbling retort.

"I'll sit with her," broke in the girl, quickly.

"No, you won't. You'll go out on the verandah immediately, and I shall watch you from the drawing-room window."

Barbara's heart sank. She would never be able to slip away as long as Mrs. Bartram was on guard, and she was longing to tell her news to Mr. Bouverie.

However, she felt it useless to rebel, so she caught up her hat and went slowly out, thinking of Betty's words, and wondering feverishly, if Mrs. Bartram would really fall

asleep. She could see her now glaring at her from her seat in the drawing-room window. No, it was no use, she should never get away.

At this point in her musings Betty walked carelessly by, armed with a big basket.

"Run, Miss Barbara!" she muttered. "I'll keep watch. She's fast off!"

"Oh, Betty! really?" gasped the girl, springing up.

"Yes, yes, quick! There's no time to lose!"

Guy Bouverie was leaning on the little green gate, staring moodily up the shady avenue, and trying to make up his mind to turn his steps homewards, when suddenly a slender figure appeared flying down the avenue towards him. A pretty, dainty lady clad in faintest pink.

"Oh, Mr. Bouverie!" she cried, running up to the gate, and clasping the rough wood frantically, while she looked at him with great gleaming eyes, a deep, deep glow in her fair cheeks, "what do you think? He—that man—is not my father at all!"

Guy gazed gladly at the beautiful, excited face, and laid his great hand on the little one that clasped the top bar of the gate. He did not know where she had gained her knowledge, he asked no questions, he just blindly, gladly, ay, rapturously, believed in her excited statement.

"I know it! I felt it!" he exclaimed. "The one thing that puzzled me was how that cad could be your father!"

Barbara smiled. She rather liked the touch of that strong, brown hand; and she certainly felt very happy at his energetic declaration.

"Yes, he is a cad! I quite think so," she replied, warmly. "It's so nice, you know, to be able to detest him as much as I like when he's nasty to me, without feeling awfully wicked. I did feel like that before; but now—" with a little relieved sigh—"ah, well!"

They were silent after that for a while. Barbara was musing deeply; and as to Guy, well, he dreaded to break that sweet silence, so delightful did he find it to feel the soft fingers under his, and look into the great pensive eyes. But all things and pleasures must have an end. Barbara descended suddenly from the clouds, and seeming to remember for the first time where her hand was, drew it sharply away, and hid it behind her with a little dignified gesture.

"I must go back," she said, decidedly.

"Oh, stay a minute!" pleaded Guy. "You have not told me how you found it all out."

She had gone a step or two away, but now, longing to tell him her strange news, she came back, and in quick, excited tones, told him her wonderful tale.

"Poor creature!" he exclaimed, pityingly, as he looked at the hurried scrawl on the bit of white paper. "Who is she, I wonder?"

Barbara shook her pretty head.

"I don't know," she said, mournfully, "it's all a mystery!"

"Yes, indeed," responded Guy, in an absent-minded manner, for he was thinking how the faintly sad expression suited the fair face. "If it comes to that, Miss Barbara, who are you?"

She laughed out at that—the melancholy droop at the corners of her mouth vanishing in dimples.

"Ah!" she said, nippantly and joyously, "I'm nobody's child!"

"That fact don't seem to grieve you much," remarked Guy, laughingly.

"No, indeed! I'd rather a great deal be nobody's child than that man's."

"You shan't be nobody's child for long!" cried Guy, rashly, growing incautious as he gazed at the brilliant smiling face with its glorious dancing eyes.

"Why do you say that?" asked Barbara, demurely. "Do you know my father or mother?"

"No—o," stammered Guy. "I—I—that is my dear old dad—would be delighted to—"

"Adopt me?" asked she, innocently, her

eyes down-dropped. "Ah! how good of him! And you! Why, you would be my brother! Eh?"

Guy frowned.

"Come with me now!" he cried, hastily, ignoring her question, "before that man comes back! The dad will be home this evening."

"Oh, no!" hurriedly. "I could not! I know now it was very wrong of me to come and see you yesterday."

"Who enlightened you?" he asked, hotly.

"Mrs. Bartram and my—that is Mr. Glaister. They—they said I ought to have been ashamed of myself!" answered the little thing, her cheeks flushing as she spoke. "He ordered me off to my room, and that hateful woman came and talked at me until I could have cried with vexation. Oh, Mr. Bouverie!"

running forward, and lifting a distressed face to him, "you know I meant no wrong? that I was not fast and forward as she said?"

The bright tears stood in her eyes as she asked the question; she looked the very picture of woe.

Guy felt obliged to lay his hand over the little trembling fingers that once more rested on the gate.

"Of course I do!" he cried, indignantly. "That woman's a vulgar wretch!"

"Ah! that's just what Ambrose said!" exclaimed she, earnestly. "He crept up to my window in the evening, and I told him. He was dreadfully angry; said you were a gentleman, and Mrs. Bartram a vulgar woman. And he told me, besides, that he knew—"

"Well?" queried Guy, for she had stopped abruptly—her face crimson—and put her finger to her pretty lips.

"Oh, nothing!" with manifest confusion.

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Guy, burning to know. "Come, tell me!"

"I—I forgot, and—and thought you were Betty!"

She burst into a merry laugh as she slowly brought out the last word and saw the disgusted expression on his face.

"Oh, come now!" cried the young man, in aggrieved tones. "Do I look like Betty?"

"No, indeed!" gaily. "Not half so strong-looking and useful!"

"You're looking very pale," said Guy, abruptly, paying no heed to this foolish remark. "What have you been doing?"

"Hemming sheets all morning," said she, looking wistfully away over the purple moor.

"And I did so long to be out!"

"You were locked up?" he cried, angrily.

She nodded, still with her eyes fixed on the stately Tors.

"My poor darling, that is—what a beastly shame!" blundered out Guy, relieved to find that his first hasty words had escaped her.

"Yes, wasn't it?" she said, readily. "I worked nearly up to dinner time, and I was so tired! See how I pricked my finger!" holding out her hand to him.

Guy came very close, and taking the hand in his firm clasp, bent down to examine it.

"Poor finger!" he cried, softly, and stooping, kissed it.

"Silly!" cried the child, reddening faintly; "that won't take the roughness away."

"What are you going to do?" asked Guy, hastily, delighted that she did not take away her hand, but fearful that she would not long be so forgetful.

"Go back, of course!" she said, dejectedly.

"Though I'm frightened, you know, for that woman is not sober, and speaks so crossly to me."

"Then you shan't go back!" cried the young man, decidedly, pushing open the gate.

"Yes, yes, I must!" she faltered, recoiling before the fierce light in his angry eyes. "I will not leave that poor creature all at once, and, besides, I may find out something of my parentage."

Guy stood, still unconvinced, but seeing she was as determined as he,—

"Will she lock you up again when you go in?" he asked, gloomily.

"Yes," quietly. "Mr. Glaister has ordered

her to do so, but I shall be all right."

"I can't bear to leave you!" cried Guy, passionately, a strange presentiment of coming evil creeping over him. "I shall think of you all night, as I have done all the time since yesterday afternoon."

Barbara's face glowed at his ardent words. She stepped a little nearer.

"I like to hear that," she said, naively. "No one ever said such a thing to me before; I—I think it very nice of you, Mr. Bouverie."

Guy smiled tenderly, and ventured a leading question.

"Did you think of me at all?" he said, humbly.

Barbara raised her face and looked straight at him, an expression of innocent bewilderment in her child-like blue eyes. "Think of you! after Mrs. Bartram's lecture? Oh, no, indeed!"

This barefaced untruth, instead of plunging Guy into the lowest depths of despair, seemed to please him wonderfully; for he smiled in a very contented fashion, and patted the tiny fingers softly.

"Won't you really come and be the dad's little daughter?" he whispered, stooping, and looking right into the sweet blue eyes.

"No, no!" petulantly. "How foolish you are, sir!"

"Then promise me this: that when, after telling him all, I bring the dear old man to see you, you will take his advice."

She hesitated a minute, but yielded at last to the pleading in the dark eyes, and whispered a faint assent.

"Thank you!" he said, simply; "he shall come to-morrow."

Barbara smiled, yet sighed too.

"I dread Mr. Glaister's return from London," she said, a troubled expression creeping over her fair face. "He—he is so awfully nasty! Oh!" laughing gleefully, "it is such a relief to be able to hate him!"

"But look here, child!" said Guy, slowly. "I wouldn't let him know just yet what that poor lady told you. There is evidently some queer work going on, and if he should find out that the secret is known to you he'll be on his guard at once."

Barbara nodded her pretty head, gravely.

"Yes," she said, dreamily. "I must still act the obedient child. Oh! how nice it would be if I could find out all about myself and that poor dumb creature!"

"Ye-es," said Guy, doubtfully; "but I'd rather some one did it for you. I don't trust that man at all, he's a sneak! Promise me to be very careful."

"Indeed I will," was the earnest reply, for the child was deeply impressed by his agitated tones.

"Ha! there is Betty waving to me! I must go. Mrs. Bartram must be waking up."

"Good-bye, then, till to-morrow," cried Guy, reluctantly, letting go the little fingers.

"Good-bye," she whispered. "Don't worry about me, I shall be all right."

Guy sighed, but was silent; and Barbara, quite touched by the dejected look in his eyes, turned very slowly away.

"Miss Barbara, wait!" called out Guy, springing forward, glad of any excuse to detain her. "You have dropped a paper."

It was her hasty sketch which she had thrust into the bosom of her gown when Mrs. Bartram summoned her, and which she had entirely forgotten.

It had fallen and fluttered right to Guy's feet, and as she turned at his hasty call the young man had stooped to pick it up.

"Don't touch it! Leave it!" cried the child, remembering.

But too late she spoke. He held it in his hand, and was gazing at it with a strange, moved expression in his handsome eyes.

"You drew this?" he demanded, hastily.

"Yes I—that is—"

She broke off faltering and blushing.

"Then you did think of me a bit?" eagerly. Something in his glance seemed to draw her to his side.

"Yes," she said, softly. "I did not tell the

truth. I did think of you, Mr. Bouverie! You—you who have been so kind to me."

He did not speak his thanks, but just drew her into his arms, and laid a gentle kiss on the childish, trembling lips.

"Oh, Mr. Bouverie!" she gasped, and wrenching herself from him, sped away up the avenue.

"My sweet darling!" muttered the infatuated young man, as he tore himself away from the old gate, and turned his steps homeward.

"Oh! how the dad will love her!"

Barbara, panting, breathless, and grimson, reached the verandah, and sinking into a seat, glanced apprehensively at the window.

Mrs. Bartram was still there, lying back in her comfortable chair.

"She'll rouse up in a minute, miss," whispered Betty, apologetically. "I was afraid she'd catch you."

"Oh, yes; thank you, Betty!" gasped Barbara, wondering if her cheeks would ever be cool again. "You—did you go away, Betty, when you had beckoned to me?"

"In course, miss!" was the indignant retort. "Bless you, I knew."

This ambiguous remark only served to deepen the glow in the girl's cheeks.

"Oh! it wouldn't have mattered," she said hastily; but Betty just looked wise, and hurried away.

"Miss Barbara!" called out Mrs. Bartram at that minute, and the girl, longing to be alone in the peaceful retirement of her own room, rose gladly and followed the somewhat sobered woman upstairs.

"Well, sitting out there has given you a fine colour," snapped out Mrs. Bartram, who had just reached the cross stage. "You look like a milkmaid!"

"Do I?" said the girl, quietly. "It was very hot there."

And then, to her intense relief, her gayer left her, fastening her in securely as she went.

The minute she was alone Barbara flew over to her looking-glass, and surveyed her pretty, flushed face intently.

"Now, why did he do that?" she murmured in anything but angry tones. "Oh, what would Mr. Glaister say? Never mind," defiantly nodding at herself. "I—I couldn't stop him, and I was very nice. Oh, Barbara dear! no one ever kissed you before in your life! Think of that!"

Much to her relief, the housekeeper did not appear again, the stolid Betty carrying up her tea and supper.

With her last appearance she brought a piece of news—a telegram had come from her master; he was coming home to-morrow night.

"Bad news, I think, were in it as well, miss," remarked Betty, "for that old cat looked black as thunder when she read it! She'll be fine and cross to-morrow, I know; so just be very careful, dear."

Barbara nodded and wished her good-night, but thought no more of Mrs. Bartram's temper.

A happy thought filled her heart, and was with her when she fell asleep—Mr. Bouverie would come with his father to-morrow, and rescue her from her life of neglect and loneliness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FLIRT AND STERN.

THE hot afternoon sun was streaming down on the great, noisy, stifling terraces as the train from Plymouth rushed majestically into its place.

From one of the carriages stepped a solemn-faced clergyman wearing blue spectacles; and closely following him—looking neither to the right nor left, keeping his eyes well-fixed on the clerical figure before him—came a man, whom five out of every six in the crowd, had they had time to notice him, would unhesitatingly have pronounced to be a commercial traveller.

Threading his way swiftly through the crowd, the clergyman left the station, and

hailing a hansom, muttered a word or two to the driver, and jumped in.

The man, whipping up his horse, drove off citywards; whereupon the commercial traveller, having in a careless manner watched the clergyman's proceedings, jumped into another hansom, telling the driver to keep the rapidly disappearing vehicle in view.

"But be very careful!" he shouted through the tiny trap door.

"I'm your man," was the quick response, as, with a grin, the Jahu slammed the door to, and rattled off.

Through endless streets they seemed to go, once or twice almost losing sight of the hansom ahead. "But not fast, such stupendous efforts did the second driver make, the distance between the two vehicles became considerably less."

Nearer crept the last, until, with a jerk, the first conveyance drew up at the door of an exceedingly dingy hotel in a melancholy-looking side street. The clergyman paid the fare and disappeared inside.

"Drive on a bit," said the commercial traveller to his man, who accordingly did so, pulling up at the end of the quiet street.

"Did I manage well, sir?" he asked, anxiously, as his fare sprang out. "Capitally," came the ready answer, and Ambrose, for he of course it was, slipped a liberal fee into his hand, and walked briskly away towards the hotel.

"Now that's handsome-like!" soliloquised caddy, as he drove away. "Blest if I keep on the box any longer this evening! I'll put up and go and 'ave a grand time at the Bull-dog," and with this laudable design he rattled away stableswards.

Ambrose walked boldly into the hotel and turned into the coffee room, where, to his infinite satisfaction, he saw the clergyman seated at a little table sipping brandy and water and writing a letter. Ordering the same for himself, he strolled over to a seat exactly opposite to the absorbed writer, and sitting down, watched him furtively from behind his paper.

"Humph, that rascally old Dan to meet him here! Wonder if I can be at the interview?" mused Ambrose, as Mr. Glaister rose, fastened up his envelope, and calling to the "Boots" of the establishment, who all this time had been hovering round as if the clergyman were a well-known customer, slipped a coin into his hand, and despatched him with the letter.

As the door of the coffee-room banged on the "Boots," one at the other end—half glass, half wood, but covered by an old faded silk curtain closely drawn, was cautiously opened, and a fat, greasy-looking man, with oily black hair, coarse, animal face, furthermore beautified by a diabolical squint, thrust his head out, and beckoned to the clergyman, who, as if he had been awaiting this summons, nodded quickly, and, crossing the room, followed him in.

"Queer place, this," reflected Ambrose, dropping his paper, and staring about him. "Strange I haven't found it out before now! Hotel, indeed! more like a very shady gambling den. Not half so respectable as the Bull-dog, and that's not saying much for Levi-son's. Dan'll be back soon, and how on earth am I to hear their little conversation?"

He ruminated for a long time, sitting for captain's sake with his paper held before him, and ostentatiously sipping his brandy for fear any one should be spying at him from behind that green curtain. By-and-bye he rang for more brandy, and was waited upon by a Jewish-looking young lady with her hair in long, floating black ringlets.

"That your master in there, my dear?" asked Ambrose, affably, waving his hand in the direction of the green-curtained door.

"Yes," she said, sharply, glancing at him suspiciously as she slammed down the brandy he had ordered. "Anything more?"

"No, thank you," was the meek response.

"Humph! not much to be got out of her," decided Ambrose, when the young lady had

once more left him to the solitude of the coffee-room. "Well, I must trust to fate and seize my opportunity. One good thing, no one here knows me, I may get 'em off guard;" and consoling himself with this reflection he pulled out his note-book, and under cover of his paper gave himself up to a careful perusal of his notes, little dreaming that he had reckoned without his host, and that already he had been recognised, not as Ambrose Nutter, the queer old gardener, but in his true character as Joseph Grey, the detective!

A very jovial party was assembled in the tap-room of the Bull-dog Inn—drinking, smoking and talking with great energy. The room was hot and crowded, the fumes of beer and spirits mingled with the overpowering smell of coarse tobacco, beat out the faint breeze that, whenever the swing door was pushed open, tried vainly to creep in.

Seated at a table a little apart from the rest was the man who had driven the second hansom that afternoon. A good part of his liberal tip had already been spent on liquor, the effects of which were beginning to appear in his flushed face and loquacious mood.

"Why, Jim!" cried a little old wrinkled man at his elbow. "An' what ye said ye was too mortal poor to have a drink again."

The cabman looked at him with tipsy gravity.

"So was, man! so was; but when one gets a detective for fare, why, one makes out of 'im."

"A detective?" echoed the little man with a quick glance out of his furtive eyes.

"Yeah sir, detective!" said John, with great dignity. "Got in my cab at Easton, had to follow 'another hansom to hotel. Old chap in parson's clothes went in, my fare followed him."

The little man started.

"What hotel?" he asked, carelessly.

"Raven, in London-street," muttered the man, trying vainly to fill his pipe.

"How d'you know your man was a detective?" said the old fellow, sharply.

"Cause knew him. Joseph Grey it was," answered the driver, sleepily.

"Damn him!" growled the old man, slipping away to the swing door, and from thence into the street, where he stood looking anxiously up and down. "Wonder if Sam knows him? No in course not! Yah! the sneaking, prying cad! I know him, though, and I'll be queer if he don't get punished a bit this evening among the lot of us!"

A man touched him on the shoulder at this minute—it was the Boots from the Raven. A gentleman of the Bill Sykes type, only needing the bull dog to complete the likeness.

"For you," he muttered, glancing suspiciously round as he thrust the letter into the old man's hand.

"Yes," exclaimed the latter, when he had read the few lines. "I'll come with you, Levison will be furious, but I'll risk that. There's money to be made to-night, ay, and work to be done."

"What work?" growled Boots, as they hurried away.

His companion bent towards him, and whispered a few words in his ear.

"What!" cried the surly-faced ruffian, a look of bitter malice gleaming in his eyes, "that man!"

"Do you know him?" cried old Dan.

"I know he got my oldest pal fifteen years! I know I swore to pay him out for it if ever I come across him!"

"Ah!" ejaculated the old man, rubbing his hands softly. "then you can pay off your debt to-night. Listen here! He's dressed like one of them men as travels round with coal, and jams, and machines. D'you know him?"

Boots gripped.

"He's sitting in the coffee-room now a-drinking brandy and water."

"Ay," murmured Dan, with a sly laugh, "I guess he's somehow seen my letter to Sam,

followed him up here, and means to try and play eavesdropper to-night. Ah, he's a bold, venturesome chap; but he's gone a little too far this time, eh?"

Boots nodded.

"What'll ye do?" he asked, abruptly.

"Why, he thinks he's safe; so we, like unsuspicious lambskins, all get a talkin' to him, arsk him into Dave's little snuggery."

"Well?"

"Well, then I shall call for summat to drink. He won't refuse, 'cause all the time, ye see, he'll be thinkin' he's got us in a trap. You bring in what I order. He jings with us, and once he's tossed it off, why, the pretty, sharp little feller is done for—at any rate for a time. He shall stay in that nice, comfortable underground bedroom of Dave's till we can safely ship him off!"

Boots gripped.

"That's very mild!" he grumbled.

"Couldn't we—"

"No, we couldn't!" cried Dan, hastily, "or, at least," his voice softening, "not till he's out o' this country."

They both smiled at these last few words, and then walked on in silence until they reached the Raven.

There the old man took the lead, and, followed by Boots, entered the dingy hooze, and sauntering into the coffee-room, walked carelessly up to a table and sat down exactly opposite to the commercial traveller, who was still sipping brandy-and-water and reading his newspaper.

CHAPTER XIX.

DRUGGED.

"BRASSLEY hot day, sir," remarked the old man presently, in a loud, careless, jovial tone.

The detective dropped his paper with a look of relief, as though tired of his own company and glad to have some one to talk to.

"You're right there," he said, emphatically, with a genial smile.

"Makes one thirsty, don't it?" went on Dan, in easy tones. "Hi, you there!" to Boots, who lingered near the door, "fetch me some brandy!"

The man nodded and disappeared through the green-curtained door, and the two left behind talked away as if mutually pleased.

"Please sir," said Boots, coming back in a short time, "the master says will you come inside? There's only a clergyman in there, and he ain't one of the pertickler sort."

The old man smiled, but hesitated.

"Mr. Moss is an old friend of mine," he explained, gently, to his companion, "I shall have to go."

"Wily old dog," thought Grey, admiringly, "he acts well." Aloud he said, politely,—

"Certainly, sir. Don't let us detain you."

Dan moved slowly across the room, a deeply thoughtful expression on his sunning face.

"Stay!" he exclaimed, suddenly, just as his fingers were on the handle of the door, "I have it. Will you join us, my dear sir?"

Grey felt puzzled. This did not look like a quiet little talk with Mr. Glaister. And yet, of course, the old fox was quite unconscious of his identity; nay, spoke to him as a mere stranger.

Yes, he would accept the invite, doing his best meanwhile to glean a few grains of information.

"I shall be delighted!" he cried, rising.

"That is, if your friend don't object."

"Oh, my friends are his friends," remarked Dan, grandly, "aren't they, Moss?" as the fat, black-haired landlord looked out with a greasy smile.

"Of course!" said Moss, with a wave of his dirty hand. "Pray come in."

A cosy little place was Mr. Moss's snuggery. A small fire burned in the grate, four or five comfortable chairs were placed about; a large spirit-stand adorned the shining mahogany sideboard.

"Lots of cheating at cards done here!"

thought Grey, as he took the chair pushed towards him, and nodded in return for the grave bend of the head bestowed upon him by the blue-spectacled clergyman.

"Glaister, Clarke, at once!" called out the host, poking the fire vigorously and glancing significantly at Dan, who took the hint, and plunged into an eager conversation with the guest.

The clergyman did not join in at all, but sat biting his nails and glowering at Grey through his spectacles.

"What'll you travel in, sir?" asked Dan, with deep interest, keeping his eyes fixed on Grey's face, yet knowing all the time that the spirit-decanter were being slowly placed on the table by Moss.

"New patent corkscrews," said Grey, promptly. "I have a few samples with me if you care to see them."

Dan laughed.

"Not I! Don't go in for such things."

"But I do," put in Moss, with a peculiar smile. "I'll look at 'em, sir, after we've had our glass together."

"Thanks," said Grey, politely. "I shall be glad to do business with you."

"And I with you," was the quiet answer.

"Now, sir," he went on, "what will you take—brandy, whiskey, or what?"

"Whiskey, thanks."

He stretched out his hand for the decanter, which Moss pushed towards him. He helped himself liberally, for though he had twice ordered brandy in the coffee-room he had cleverly managed to pour it away even whilst seeming to sip it, and now felt that the wisest way to put them off their guard was to appear to drink heavily.

"I'll trouble you for the bottle, my friend," remarked Dan from the other side of the table.

Grey rose to hand it, and, moving suddenly, his heavy chair tipped over backward and fell with a loud crash.

"How stupid of me!" cried the detective, apologetically, stooping to pick it up.

This was the grand chance for the three desperate men.

As the little detective turned Dan noiselessly exchanged the two decanters on the table for a pair of similar ones on the sideboard; and as Grey pulled his chair up and sat down he was helping himself—or at least so it appeared to the detective—from the very decanter he, Grey, had pushed across. The clergyman and Moss followed his example, and lifting their glasses drained the contents at a gulp.

"Come, we mustn't be behindhand!" cried Dan, peculiarly. "Your health, sir!"

Grey smiled, and eager to please them, emptied his glass as they had done.

As he put it down again he was startled and alarmed to see how peculiarly his companions were regarding him—a look of eager expectancy in every eye, a devilish smile on every face.

"Curse you!" he cried out, trying to rise, but finding that his limbs were fast becoming numb and powerless. "You've drugged me, you villains!"

He fell back helplessly as he spoke, his head in a terrific whirl; his eyes felt as though they were starting from their sockets; an awful sensation of numbness all through his frame.

"Yes," laughed Dan, gleefully dancing round him, while through the film that was fast stealing over his eyes he saw that Mr. Glaister was watching him malignantly. "You're mighty clever, Grey, my boy, but not clever enough for us!"

The detective made a fearful effort to struggle to his feet, but Charley, coming up behind him, held him savagely down. The last thing he saw was Dan triumphantly waving his precious note-book, and then a darkness stole over all his senses, and he fell back unconscious.

"Safe now!" cried Glaister, exultingly.

"He alone knew my secret."

And just one or two friends, old chap,



["DEARLY HOT DAY, SIR!" SAID DAN, CARELESSLY, AS HE SEATED HIMSELF AT THE COFFEE ROOM TABLE.]

who will be quite silent—if paid!" remarked Dan, significantly, looking up as he helped Charley to move the heavy mahogany table.

Glaister frowned and bit his lip savagely, but came forward and helped to pull up the trap door which formed part of the floor. It was raised at last, and Charley, descending the steep ladder inside, stood waiting to receive the detective's senseless body.

It was a gloomy cellar into which they were about to lower the unfortunate man, a damp earthy place with one small slit of a window high up in the wall, and looking out only on a dismal little yard shut in by high stone walls.

"Hope he'll like it," muttered Dan, as with Moss he slowly lowered the body. Pacing him on a small, hard bed, Charley with an irrepressible shudder, ran up the ladder, sprang out, and in a minute had shut down the trap door, giving a vicious stamp on it as he shot the heavy bolt. "He won't give another o' my pals fifteen year," he snarled. "Ugh! what a damp hole that is!"

"Here! help yourself!" cried his master with a sneering laugh. "Are you frightened, man?"

"No," sullenly, "but I must be paid for keeping silent, remember."

The clergyman moved uneasily on his chair, but Dan answered for him.

"In course you shall! Mr. Glaister means to act fairly. Go away now, and leave us to settle all."

Charley slouched away, and the three kindred spirits drew up their chairs to the blaze, a queer feeling of chilliness overpowering them, and talked earnestly in low, hushed tones.

"You see, Sam," said Dan, after awhile, "from this nice little book we find he's been spying round you without you knowing anything at all about it."

"Ay, confound him!" growled Glaister, filling his glass.

"Well," continued Dan slowly, "he'll know all about that there mute creature, and who knows he may ha' let it out to some-one!"

Glaister started.

"Ah, yes, that's true! But what can I do with her?" helplessly.

"You say she's cracked?"

Glaister nodded.

"Well, then, what's easier? Clap her into a madhouse!"

Glaister shook his head.

"She's not that bad!" he said, slowly.

"Pshaw! You know who'd take her—mad or not—and ask no questions so long as he was well paid."

"What, Bonner d'you mean?"

"In course! Lose no time; go and see him and take him down with you."

The clergyman was silent, gazing into the fire, and the two other worthies watched him narrowly.

"Yes, I will!" he cried at last. "I'll never be safe until she's away."

"And Grey out of the country," put in Moss quietly.

Glaister turned quickly.

"When will he go?" he asked.

"In five or six days. I must hear of a boat I can trust; then with one more dose to make him quiet he'll easily be got away."

"And I'd advise you to clear out, my friend," remarked Dan, sharply. "Bad thing for you you came back, though good for us, you know."

Glaister sighed heavily.

"I—I'll think of it," he said hesitatingly.

Dan looked scornful, and ignored this vacillating remark.

"What about the girl?" he asked, presently, getting up and looking for his hat.

"Oo, I shall take her back to America with me," said Glaister, slowly. "When we are safe there she shall hear that I am not her

father, and, to make the business sure, I shall marry her!"

Dan laughed.

"Well arranged!" he cried. "By-the-bye, Sam, where did you pick her up?"

A cunning look came into Glaister's eyes.

"That's my business," he said, rudely. "If I choose to adopt a friendless orphan, what's that to you?"

"Oo, nothing!" cried Dan, hastily.

"D'you war' any money to-night?" asked Glaister, taking out his purse. "I've fifty here."

Moss's eyes glistened, but it was Dan who answered.

"Ay, we could do wi' a bit. That's twenty a-piece for me and Dave, and ten for Charley."

In silence Glaister handed the sum required to each, and laid the other tenpound note on the table for "Boots."

"The rest when he's gone," he said, hoarsely, glancing downwards.

"Yes, that's fair," was Dan's ready answer.

"Let's see, a thousand each for we two, and a hundred for Charley, eh?"

Glaister nodded.

"I'm off to Bonner's now. He must go down with me to-morrow," he said, moving towards the door.

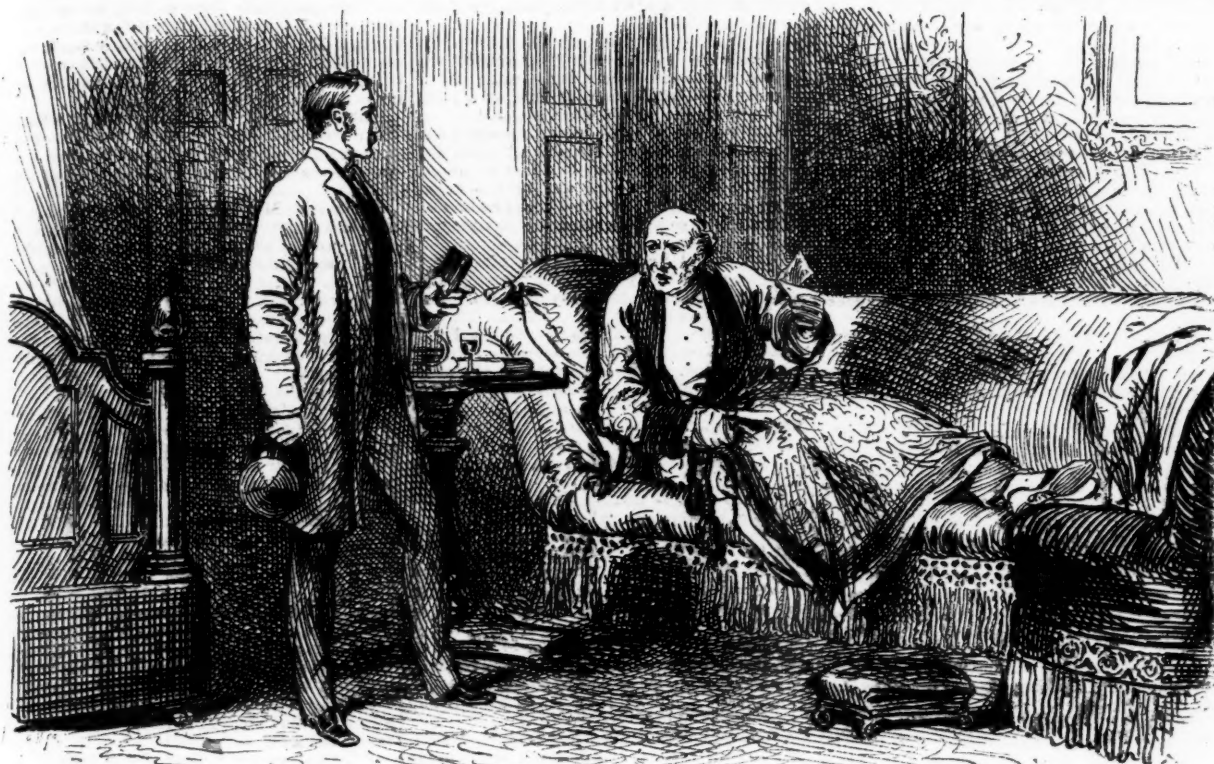
"That's right," ejaculated Dan. Then warmly, "Keep faith with us, Sam, or we may prove nasty!"

"What else can I do?" was the gloomy response, as he pulled open the glass door and hurriedly crossed the coffee-room. The two left behind looked meaningfully at each other.

"He's a coward," remarked the landlord, heavily, "but so much the better for us!"

"Ay," responded Dan, putting his money in an inner pocket, and passing it affectionately, "and if we could only find out the mystery about that girl, I believe our fortunes would be made!"

(To be continued.)



["I NEVER SAW THAT CHEQUE BEFORE," SAID THE SQUIRE, "AND THE SIGNATURE ISN'T MINE!"]

A LATE ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER XV.

THE Squire was not dead!

William and one of the footmen carried him to his own room. A groom was sent riding as for dear life into Kesterton to summon Dr. West, while Arline and the old housekeeper did their best to restore the old man from his long swoon. All their efforts seemed fruitless, and at last they had to desist and wait for the doctor's arrival.

Sydney West had attended the Squire ever since he came to Digby Place. The two were staunch friends, and though the doctor was the junior of the pair by nearly twenty years, he enjoyed a larger share of James Rushton's confidence than any other of his acquaintances.

Dr. West had attended Mrs. Rushton in her last illness, and being an observant man had guessed some heavy sorrow lay near her heart.

He had never mentioned this to anyone. He would not seek to force the Squire's confidence, and for Arline, though he had known her from a little child, he cherished one of those strange dislikes which people sometimes conceive without reason, and yet feel in their own hearts are justified, though they cannot explain how.

To the doctor Arline repeated the story already told to the servants. She had been disturbed by some noise—the sound of voices, as she believed. She was just thinking of going downstairs to investigate for herself when she heard her father scream.

The servants had accepted this story as gospel; Dr. West had his doubts.

"Do you mean to infer that the Squire had a hand-to-hand struggle with burglars?" he asked, when he had listened in patience to

Arline's theory and was anxious to go to his patient.

"Yes—there can be no other explanation."

"I think you are mistaken. There is not the slightest trace"—here he glanced round the library—"of a scuffle. Burglars, Miss Rushton, don't trust to their fists. I see no sign of any weapon. Besides, if you heard your father scream, his assailants in the same room would have heard him also, and, knowing help would come, must have made their escape in a hurry. The man who fetched me assured me the front door was barred and bolted with the utmost precautions last night, and that none of the fastenings had been tampered with."

Arline regretted the care she had taken to rebolt the door. Evidently the story of a robbery would not hold water.

Dr. West went upstairs. He examined the Squire very carefully and then he gave his verdict. The patient had probably lost his footing, tripped and fallen. As the candlestick had been picked up close to where he was discovered, the presumption was that the draught extinguished his light as the Squire opened the door, and that, missing his way in the dark, he had a nasty fall.

"Unless his head struck something and he received an injury to the brain there is nothing to be alarmed at. See, Miss Rushton, he is coming to."

The old man opened his eyes, looked feebly round the room, recognised the doctor, and pressed his hand.

"Ah, West, you were always telling me not to read in bed. You can triumph over me now."

Dr. West gave him a cordial. He drained the glass, and a faint colour came back to his withered cheeks.

"I've given them all a fine fright, ha! ha!" said the Squire, cheerfully. "Well, pride must have a fall, I suppose, but I did think I

knew my way about my own house, even in the dark."

Arline listened bewildered. Did her father really believe his fall an accident, or was he talking like this because he had recognised her and Clifton in the library, and wanted to keep her disgraceful secret from the doctor?

She was soon to have this question set at rest, for Mrs. Hobbs asked respectfully,—

"Did you see who knocked you down, sir?"

"Knocked me down!" exclaimed the Squire, who seemed quite himself again, though one of his arms was badly bruised, and he admitted he felt very shaky. "What will you ask next, Hobbs? My candle was blown out by the wind, and like an idiot I stumbled over a chair or something and measured my length on the floor."

"Miss Rushton said she heard voices, sir, and was going downstairs to see who was there when she heard you scream," said the housekeeper, eager to defend herself.

"Come, Arline," said her father, "what could you be thinking of? Robbers at Digby Place! Well, they'll have to break down the door and take out one or two of the window panes to get in, unless someone obligingly assisted them from inside, which I don't believe a servant in my employ would be base enough to do. Besides, my dear, I'm an old man, and not inclined to do valorous acts. If I'd fancied robbers were in the house I should just have rung the alarm bell, not have rushed downstairs and invited the thieves to murder me."

Arline looked intensely annoyed.

"You need not make game of me," she said, very coldly. "I am sure it was a natural mistake."

But the Squire sat up in bed and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"My dear girl, it's too absurd. I have a restless night, and go downstairs to look for a book, the wind blows out my candle, and I

tumble over a chair. You forthwith decide robbers are in the house engaged in murdering me."

"You screamed," persisted Arline.

"My dear, at seventy odd years a tumble is no slight matter. To feel yourself falling, you know not where in a dark room, is rather an alarming experience."

Arline left the room very much put out.

Mrs. Hobbs and the doctor remained to make the Squire more comfortable by bathing the bruised arm with arnica and water. Finally the good old housekeeper retreated, and doctor and patient were left alone.

"You'll be as right as ever in a few days if you keep quiet; but, Squire, don't repeat the experiment. Falls are dangerous at your age."

"I sha'n't repeat it," said James Roshon, cheerfully. "What's the matter with Arline, West? She looked as white as a sheet."

"She is naturally frightened at your accident."

"She behaved very badly," said the Squire, though he would not have let anyone else speak so plainly of his idolized daughter. "The idea of persuading the servants there had been a robbery here. Why, it's half over Kesterton by this time. She knows how I detest gossip, and this place is a regular hot-bed of it."

"Yes," said Dr. West, quietly, looking keenly at the Squire, and speaking with a certain grim significance. "Kesterton does firmly believe the proper study of mankind is man, and so I think, Mr. Roshon, people who live hereabouts should be specially careful not to do anything rumour can take hold of."

"If you mean that for me," said the Squire, tartly, "I'd much rather you spoke plainly. I detest hints. At the same time I don't care much what Kesterton likes to say about me. I daresay they'll suggest the cause of my fall was a too liberal allowance of whisky the night before, but I don't care. If it pleases the idiots to make me out a scoundrel, why—let 'em."

"My dear old friend," said Dr. West, kindly, "don't work yourself up into a rage. There's no one in Kesterton would say a harsh word of you; and as to what you suggested, why, they'd be ashamed even to hint at such a calumny."

"Then what did you mean?"

Dr. West was silent.

"I know you have something in your mind," cried the angry old man. "You meant I was not as careful as I might be to give the hateful old gossips no room for scandal."

"I was not thinking of you, Squire."

"Of my daughter, I suppose, then."

"Yes."

"Well, what has Arline done, to promote gossip? Oh, I can guess; she has been seen in Kesterton with her cousin Digby. Well, why not? If a lady can't drive out with her nearest kinsman she's come to a pretty pass! I suppose people think he is in love with her. All the better if he is, since my greatest earthly wish is to see them married."

Dr. West felt as though he had aroused a sleeping lion, but he persevered.

"I have not heard any mention of Mr. Digby Roshon. It is said in Kesterton that Horace Clifton has returned to this neighbourhood, and has been seen hanging about the grounds of the Place."

"Rubbish!" said the Squire, testily, "a pack of lies, West, from beginning to end. Clifton was a good-looking scamp who had the audacity to lift his eyes to my daughter. I threatened to horse-whip him, and he went off to London eight years ago. He's never been heard of here since. He didn't even come down to take a look at the old farm before his father sold it and emigrated to America. It was a presumptuous thing of him to fall in love with Arline, and an insult to me; but upon my word, I think the people who dare to say he's come back on the chance of getting her

to listen to him after eight years are more outrageous still."

Dr. West kept perfectly silent.

"You'll be saying next," grumbled the Squire, "that you believe it yourself. As if Miss Roshon would stoop to look at a farm labourer, and he wasn't much better."

"Clifton was educated over his eldest son and gave him a good education," said Dr. West, slowly. "It's no business of mine. You'll probably turn me out of the house when I've told you; but now you'll be laid up for a week or so and unable to see to things, I must warn you."

"Oh, go on!" said the Squire, mockingly. "Someone has told you that someone else saw a person like Clifton near my grounds. You see I can guess it all."

"Not quite. Two nights ago, Squire, I was called to a woman in one of your cottages near the wood. I did not leave her till after midnight, and to save time I took the path across the wood. It was moonlight and as bright as day. I saw Clifton leaning over the stile which divides your shrubbery from the wood; he looked as though he were waiting for someone."

"If he was, it needn't have been Arline," snapped the Squire. "You're as bad a gossip as any old woman, West. I mean what I say."

Perhaps he did, but the warning must have been taken more seriously than he owned; for when Dr. West departed, the Squire wrung his hand, and said, simply—

"I can trust you—not a word to anyone of what you saw, for her mother's sake."

The fruit of Dr. West's warning was soon forthcoming. The Squire pealed his bell and demanded the housekeeper.

"Shut the door, Hobbs," he said, testily, "and turn the key. You have been in my service a good many years. I am going to give you some orders which may seem strange to you. Can I trust you to carry them out and hold your tongue?"

Hobbs made no noisy protestation. She only said gravely—

"You can reckon on me, sir; I never betrayed your secrets yet, and I sha'n't begin now."

But his next question surprised her.

"How many ways are there of getting out of this house, Hobbs? I don't mean the stables and servants' entrances, the way to all those is cut off by the green baize door at the end of the hall."

"You mean if that door were locked, sir?" questioned Hobbs, slowly.

"Just so!" the Squire smiled rather bitterly. "I may be calculating how many ways the robbers Miss Arline heard of at getting away, you know! Any way, tell me!"

"Yes, sir. When once that door is locked, which is done by the master at ten o'clock—for, you see, sir, Miss Roshon's maid and your valet sleep this side, and the butler has a pass key of his own, so he always locks that door at ten as regular as clockwork—"

The Squire nodded.

"And then—"

"Why, sir, the men shut and lock the windows before they go to bed; besides, there's none of our windows is so easy to jump out of. There's the grand entrance and the private door which leads towards the lane and the shrubbery. That's all."

"And who fastens these?"

"The butler, sir. The keys of course remain in the locks, but he makes the bolts and bars secure."

"Now, Mrs. Hobbs, while I am laid aside, and it will be a week before I am downstairs again, I require you to bring me those two keys every evening at ten precisely, having first satisfied yourself the doors are properly locked and bolted."

Mrs. Hobbs courtseyed.

"Yes, sir; but—"

"You said I could trust you, woman."

"It shall be done, sir; but Miss Roshon may not like it. She gave orders only a week

ago that the private door, as it is never used except by the family, should be left unfastened. She said Mr. Digby liked to take a stroll on the terrace with his cigar the last thing, and that I might always depend upon his fastening it."

Hobbs and her master looked at each other. The Squire said nothing. That the miserable rumour about Horace Clifton had reached his housekeeper he felt certain, but he asked no question.

"You see, Mr. Digby is not here now," said the Squire, lamely, after a lengthy pause, "and I should feel safer if I had the keys in my own keeping."

"Certainly sir, it shall be attended to."

"And for the present William had better sleep in my dressing-room. Then, if I am unusually wakeful, I can send him to the library. You will make arrangements accordingly, Hobbs."

"Yes, sir."

The Squire's bedroom had a door communicating with the long corridor, but it was invariably kept locked, it being the old man's custom to enter his room through his dressing-room, which was a fair-sized ante-chamber. Could James Roshon have taken the doctor's warning so much to heart that he feared his daughter might attempt to steal the keys while he slept?

Arline spent the whole afternoon with the Squire reading aloud to him, for he said he was too tired to talk. He seemed far more upset from the accident now than he had been when he first recovered consciousness. Poor man, Dr. West had meant his warning in truest kindness, but it had filled his patient's mind with miserable doubts. Arline fancied he was asleep and had stopped reading, when he said to her suddenly—

"By the way, my dear, I was rather unkind this morning in making light of your fears."

"You did not mean to be," said Arline, sweetly. "It was natural you should speak sharply when you were so ill."

"Well, my dear, I am going to guard against all dangers real or imaginary. Until Digby returns, the keys of the grand entrance and the little private door are to be brought to me as soon as all has been made secure for the night."

"Papa! is that necessary?"

"I think so, my dear. Any way, it is a precaution that can do no harm."

"Won't it make the servants nervous, papa?"

"Not at all. They have a separate entrance, though it won't affect them, for Hobbs is too careful to allow any of the maids to be gadding about late at night."

"What could Arline answer? That very night Clifton would be exposing her at their trying-place, and expect in vain. Perhaps, in a day or two, her father would give up this strange new freak of his. Meanwhile, she was cut off from all communication with her husband."

CHAPTER XVI.

HORACE CLIFTON went to the trying-place three times without meeting his wife; then he jumped to the conclusion that the Squire's illness had taken a serious turn, and Arline was unable to leave him.

Private, the young man thought it a pity that Mr. Roshon lingered so long, and he was quite prepared to dispense with his wife's society for the present if her absence meant that she was nearer her inheritance.

For prudential reasons he had never before trusted Arline with the place of his abode, but now he wrote a cautiously worded letter to the effect that "the person Miss Roshon employed was at the 'Blue Lion,' Kesterton, and would be glad of any honest job."

With his wonderful talent for disguising his handwriting, Clifton had not the slightest difficulty in making the note resemble such a

one as might come from a sympathiser of the lower orders. The initials "H. C." in the corner would tell their own tale to Arline, and yet betray nothing if the epistle fell into adverse hands.

By return of post he had this reply, framed with admirable prudence on the model of his own, and couched in the third person.

"Miss Rushton was unable to see H. C. at present, but thought she had given sufficient directions for the work she required to be accomplished. As soon as the Squire was better she would come herself, and judge of H. C.'s goodness as a needlewoman."

Clifton put the note into his pocket with a muttered word of approval.

She's a deep one, she is. It was a mistake for her to have been born the daughter of a rich country gentleman; she has a fortune in her wits, and is an intriguer to her finger tips."

His money was falling short. He was of the opinion he had better hurry on the business; while Arline was engaged with her father, he would be able to secure the lion's share of the spoil. As well "borrow" the Squire's name for a large amount as a small; and so long as Arline had the sum necessary for Hester Dixon, it would not matter to her what became of the rest.

Horace Clifton had not overrated his talents; when he looked at the signature on the false cheque and compared it with that of a letter from the Squire which Arline had sent him, he told himself no one could detect any difference between them.

A greater difficulty was to whom should the cheque be made payable. This puzzled the forger for some time; at last he thought of a plan which would suit him down to the ground, since, besides other advantages, it might draw suspicion to a man whom Clifton hated because he had been the chief witness against him in the prosecution for that other forgery which resulted in his spending seven long years as a convict.

He would make the cheque payable to "Digby Rushton or bearer," thus avoiding the necessity of endorsing it. What more natural than that the Squire should make a handsome present to his heir? A general description of Clifton would apply equally to Digby Rushton.

To those who knew both men there was not the shadow of any resemblance between them; but both were about the same age, both were dark and good-looking.

It was delightful to the ex-convict to think he might sow dissension between the Squire and his heir; might even lead to the latter having to defend himself from a charge of forgery.

The Squire banked with an old-established firm near Charing Cross, Messrs. Jackson's had had his account for years, and enjoyed his fullest confidence.

Clifton coolly presented himself at the bank at half-past three, when he guessed the number of customers would be large, though, as it still wanted thirty minutes to closing time, there would be no danger of his having to depart unattended to.

One of the senior clerks came forward. He looked at the amount of the cheque—two hundred pounds—and seemed surprised; he glanced again at the signature, and decided it was all right. He could have sworn to the peculiar crabbed hand.

Clifton noticed his slight hesitation.

"I should like the money in gold, please," he said, cheerfully. "I am just starting for a holiday in Normandy, and my cousin gave me an open cheque that I might get it cashed promptly."

"Are you Mr. Digby Rushton?" asked the clerk, thinking it best to be on the safe side, even if it offended this communicative young man.

Clifton was prepared for the question. He had paid a visit to a cheap fancy printer's that morning, who advertised "Your card and plate engraved while you wait." The plate he

had not troubled about, but he carried off fifty cards with him, and he now handed a neat little russet leather case well filled with them to the clerk.

"I don't think there's much doubt about it," he remarked, carelessly.

"You'll excuse the question, I hope?" remarked the clerk, quite convinced all was right. "I've been here ten years, and it is the first time Mr. Rushton ever signed a cheque payable to bearer without crossing it."

Clifton never flinched. He took the money, put it in a nice little canvas bag such as a tourist might be supposed to carry, slipped the bag into the pocket of his light overcoat and left the bank.

He betrayed not the slightest sign of haste; he did not even call a cab on gaining the Strand, but strolled down a quiet side street till he came to the Temple Station; took a third-class ticket for the Mansion House, but alighted at Blackfriars, where he embarked on a penny steamer for Chelsea.

Having thus, as he decided, cut off all clue by which he could be traced, he returned to Kesterton via Willesden Junction, took off his beard and whiskers in the seclusion of a first-class carriage, of which he had the sole enjoyment, and appeared at the "Blue Lion" in time to partake of the substantial dinner he had ordered for eight o'clock. After which he took a stroll down the town, hoping to pick up some news concerning the master of Digby Place.

But Thursday was market day at Kesterton, and though all traces of the itinerant merchants, who pitched their stalls in the old-fashioned market place, had disappeared, the town was still holding a kind of festival. A band was playing, people were discussing the prices of fruits and poultry, no one seemed to have much interest in the Squire and his illness.

Clifton dared not put a direct question, and though he contrived to overhear several conversations not meant for his benefit, he never once caught a mention of Arline and her father.

The servants of Digby Place were of opinion just now that Miss Rushton's temper was beyond bearing. Since her father's accident, as the occurrence of Saturday night was called she had hardly had a civil word for anyone.

Mrs. Hobbs had much ado to check the grumbings of her subordinates, and though, from respect for "the family," she waded down on the malcontents, in her heart the good woman sympathised with them, and felt so far from easy at the existing state of affairs at Digby Place that had she only known the heir's address she would certainly have communicated with him, and begged him for the Squire's sake to return to Kesterton.

A week passed, and the old gentleman seemed no better. The injury, spoken of at first as slight, seemed to have quite broken down his strength. He still kept his own room, only rising for a few hours each day to lie on the sofa.

Mrs. Hobbs really fancied he did not care whether he recovered or not, and she spoke her thoughts very freely to the doctor.

"It's just as though he'd something on his mind, Dr. West, which prevented his getting better. I'm sure he's no stronger, though it's a week last Saturday that it happened. I wish he'd send for Mr. Digby."

"He has sent," replied Dr. West, slowly. "He told me he sent his cousin the news of his accident, and begged him to return at once. He is so annoyed at the young fellow's neglect that he won't let me write to him as I wished to do."

"I'd write fast enough myself if I had the address," said Mrs. Hobbs. "The master's right hand is so helpless he can't hold a pen; and if Miss Arline wrote, it's easy to guess she put something in her letter to prevent Mr. Digby's coming back, seeing she hates him like poison!"

Dr. West started.

"Do you mean that, Mrs. Hobbs?"

"Yes, sir, I do. From the very first Miss Rushton objected to her cousin's coming here, and if the Squire dictated a letter to her, he'd natural trust her to put what he said, and not ask to look at it afterwards. She'd have a fine chance for doing Mr. Digby an evil turn!"

"The Squire won't give me the address. I asked him for it this very morning. Have you no idea of it, Mrs. Hobbs?"

"He's with his mother, sir, and the lives in Sussex; but that's not much clue. Oh! but Miss Arline has played her cards well. She's made the Squire think Mr. Digby won't come to him, while very likely the poor young gentleman's not so much as heard of his cousin's illness."

Dr. West looked sharply at the housekeeper.

"You don't seem much attached to Miss Rushton—yet you must have known her from her childhood."

"It's hard work to be attached to those who've no heart, Doctor, and her best friends couldn't say Miss Arline had much of that; besides, I don't like the way she's going on now!"

Dr. West closed the door.

"If you've anything on your mind, Mrs. Hobbs, that you'd tell Mr. Digby if he were here, hadn't you better trust me. I am an old friend of your master's, and I have heard a good many secrets in my time."

The housekeeper wanted no second invitation; she poured out her story, how the Squire's orders were the butler was to lock both the entrances and take the keys to him at ten o'clock.

"I noticed, sir, Miss Arline was not best pleased at the time. If you'll believe me, I missed the key of the private door, as it's called, the very next day. It had been put in the lock by the butler the first thing. By ten o'clock it was gone!"

"And you taxed the maids?"

"No, sir. William, the master's valet, told me he saw Miss Rushton take the key out, and walk off with it. I said not a word to her, but I sent for the carpenter from Kesterton, and by noon there was another lock on that door which the old key wouldn't fit. Miss Rushton was shut up with the Squire, and heard nothing. The new key I take care of myself in the day time when the door's unlocked. It's never out of my keeping or the Squire's!"

"You are sure she took the key for some special purpose?"

"Sir, though it seemed almost a sin to be spying on my master's daughter, I made sure of that. I waited till all was quiet, then I crept downstairs into a little room called the snugery, which is close to the private door leading into the grounds. I heard Miss Rushton come down. I heard some one try and put a key into the lock. At last, when I thought she had given it up, I came out. She didn't see me, she was going upstairs then; but the look on her face, Dr. West, was like a fury's!"

Dr. West quite believed it. He himself was far from easy at the state of things at the Place. He even thought of going up to London and trying to find out Digby Rushton's address; but a country doctor is not master of his own time. He was unusually busy just then, and he let the matter slide. How deeply he regretted the delay in a few days, no tongue can tell.

The Squire's right hand was helpless. It had received some severe strain in the fall. Some of the fingers had been hurt, and it would probably be weeks before they recovered their normal power.

Perhaps the old man himself did not think Arline a perfect secretary, for a few days after the consultation between the doctor and housekeeper the Squire requested his old friend to write a letter for him to his bankers. It was to inform these gentlemen of his accident, and how impossible it would be for him to sign cheques as usual.

Since the household expenses required a certain amount of ready money, Mr. Rushton intimated that he would for the present use his left hand, and he sent them a facsimile of his future signature that they might duly honour it.

The letter was despatched on Friday by an early post. At six o'clock a gentleman reached Digby Place, who sent up a message to the Squire that he was a clerk in Messrs. Jackson's bank, and the partner had commissioned him to call on the subject of Mr. Rushton's letter.

Arline was in her own room, and heard nothing of the arrival. The Squire, who was dressed and on his sofa, had no aversion to receiving Messrs. Jackson's messenger, and greeted him very pleasantly.

"Cautious people, you bankers, I must say. I suppose you've been sent down to see me sign my name with my left hand and verify the fact?"

"Not exactly. The firm thought I had better come. Something rather unpleasant has happened, and I'm the person they blame; they wanted me to explain it to you. Mr. Rushton, your letter distinctly named Saturday week as the date of your accident."

"Ah, I've been laid by a fortnight to-morrow. It's tedious work."

"And you have signed no cheques during that time?"

The Squire stretched out his right hand, which was swathed in wet bandages, and thus looked double its natural size.

"Does it look like it?"

"Then I am ruined!" said Cameron, brokenly. "Look at this cheque, Mr. Rushton. I believed it was your signature, and cashed it at once. The partners say I ought to have consulted them, as for you to sign an open cheque for so large an amount was unprecedented. But the gentleman offered such a natural explanation of the matter I was taken in."

"I never saw that cheque before," said the Squire, "and the signature is not mine; but you shouldn't suffer through me, Mr. Cameron. I will lose this money, and the bank shall get off scot free on condition they don't make you any the worse for your mistake. Why, the signature is so like mine it might have deceived a dozen people. Make your mind easy about your own share of the transaction, Mr. Cameron, and then tell me everything from beginning to end."

Which Guy Cameron was quite ready to do. He gave a very graphic description of the episode, laying special stress on his having asked for the stranger's card.

"Should you know the fellow again?"

"It was near closing time, and the bank was full. I am afraid I could not swear to the gentleman. I couldn't describe him beyond vaguely that he was dark and good-looking, but I should know his voice among a hundred."

"It must have been the man to whom the cheque is payable—Digby Rushton."

"I am afraid so."

"And I have heaped benefits upon him. I would have had him marry my daughter. Thank Heaven I have discovered his true character in time, young man," and the Squire turned to the clerk almost solemnly. "Let this be a warning to you. Don't deceive anyone who trusts you. I would have paid this money ten times over rather than one of my name should have stooped to this."

"If you undertake the loss, sir, the bank will hush it up," said Cameron, earnestly. "Indeed, there is no necessity for them to know the cheque is forged."

The Squire shook his head.

"I will bear the loss, but I will prosecute the sinner with the utmost rigour of the law. I might have forgiven anyone in desperate straits for the money, but Digby Rushton had a sufficient income. He had only to speak to me and I would have increased it. Besides," and the old man's voice grew very bitter, "his ingratitude is of the deepest die. I have

written, telling him I am ill and begging him to return, and he has taken not the slightest notice."

Enter Arline dressed for dinner. Very lovely she looked in her sweeping silk and lace. Her father told her the story as he had heard it. She grew so white as she listened, that the clerk wondered if she could have had any tender interest in her handsome cousin.

"Mr. Cameron will dine with you, Arline," said the Squire. "No," as the young man would have excused himself, "you can't return to London without partaking of the hospitality of the Place. Besides, I have an errand in town I shall want you to undertake for me."

Conversation dragged sadly while the servants were in the room. As soon as they had retired Arline asked, impulsively,—

"Should you know this man again?"

"I fear not. As I have explained to the Squire, the bank was full and I was unusually busy. I remember his voice perfectly, but I have only a confused recollection of his face."

"Ah!"

She said no more. Cameron decided that in spite of her beauty she was a most uninteresting young woman. He was glad to get back to the Squire, who was far more to his taste than the lady.

"You can spare an hour or two to-morrow afternoon to help me, then?" asked Mr. Rushton. "I think you leave the bank on Saturdays at two? I want you to go to this address and see Mr. Morton. He used to be one of the first detectives in London. Give him this letter, and tell him all you have told me. If he is sharp he will get a warrant issued for Digby Rushton's arrest, and on Monday he can be trapped."

Cameron opened his eyes.

"But do you know his address, sir? He only told me he was going to Normandy."

"I can tell you where his mother lives. She will direct the detective to him. Let Morton go in plain clothes and say he comes from me, then there will be no difficulty. She regards me as a benevolent Providence, poor woman, and will imagine I want her son for his own advantage."

"It seems hard on her," said Cameron, slowly. "She will feel later she has betrayed her own son to justice."

"Then she should have brought him up to be honest," said the Squire, coldly.

(To be continued.)

AUSTRALIA is the antipode of the entire world. In that country a rising barometer indicates rain, and a falling barometer fair weather. The swans are black and the eagles white; the mole is oviparous, and has a duck's beak; the dogs have a wolf's head, a fox's tail, and never bark. They also have a bird with a tongue like a broom, and a fish which has part of the body belonging to the genus *Kaia* and part to the genus *Squalo*. Many winged serpents are found there, and fish with large feathery wings. The emu is a bird as large as an ostrich, but instead of feathers has hair. One bird has a note like a bell, another cries like a child, while a third laughs as though his sides would split.

SOUTH AFRICA is taking steps to prohibit Chinese immigration. The prejudice against Chinamen is almost world-wide. There may be a few South American countries where they are still admitted, but even these countries will soon be shut against them. China herself treats strangers in an inhospitable way. The gates of her cities are barred against them. The few ports where citizens of civilized countries reside for purposes of trade have their foreign quarters established quite distinct from the native district, and the appearance of a stranger therein is sufficient to set the rabble upon him, or to subject him to insult and injury. Whether at home or abroad the Chinaman is undesirable.

JASPER PALLISER'S GRANDDAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE MEETING.

MRS. MACDONALD sat in the veranda of her pretty country house, at the fashionable watering place of Cliffs Villa, U.S.A. and with a thoughtful vexed look on her handsome face.

She held a letter in her hand, bearing an English stamp and post-mark, the contents of which had evidently upset her.

"Is Clara Maddison telling me the truth, now?" she thought. "Clara's a bit spiteful, and envies me my liberty. It's all very well to go to Europe and travel round, but its another to drag a vulgar, bragging fellow, like Cyrus Maddison, along with you. Perhaps she's only written this to rile me. Guess it will be my own fault if the tale turns out true. I ought to have made up my mind last fall, before he went away, but I couldn't. A woman like me, rich and independent, gives up a deal when she marries again. It's a risk, too. I had a dozen offers before I'd been six months a widow, but they were all after my money. Poor mean fellows, with n'er a dollar to bless themselves with. I don't mean Silas, though, poor Silas! No, he loved me when I was Armanda Jennings, and milked poor father's cows, fed the chickens, and did the chores on the farm. No! he don't want my money a bit more than Lord B. does, who's got a castle, and lands, and money enough too in the old country. I wonder can it be true? I wonder what this girl—this heiress is like, Clara says Lord B. is making love to. Like me, I wonder!"

And she looked at the large mirror that stood at the opposite side of the room.

It reflected the image of a tall, well-formed woman of about thirty, with handsome, strongly-marked features, large dark eyes, luxuriant black hair, and a full superb figure.

There was resolution, firmness and intelligence in the dark eyes that met yours so fearlessly and honestly, and the full, red-lipped mouth betokened kindness of heart and good nature. Neither meanness, cunning, nor deceit, a physiognomist would have said, could possibly find a place in the bosom of one possessed of such a broad well-developed forehead, and such a grandly formed head.

"I don't believe what Clara Maddison says," she went on, turning from the mirror again. "She wants to keep me here at home, that's all. But I won't stay. I'll go—to Europe by the very next boat. Only I wonder what Silas will say, poor fellow! He never liked Rosallyn; but then of course he didn't, he'd never like anyone who loved me, seeing as how he wants me himself, poor boy."

She smiled a little at the thought. It was nice to have a cousin like Silas Brookfield devoted to her, and who managed all her affairs so well. It didn't strike her that Silas Brookfield's part of the bargain was not so pleasant as hers—that he did everything for her, and received nothing in return. Not even thanks sometimes. Certainly not the love he coveted.

A step was heard in the veranda.

"Is it you, Silas?" she cried.

"Yes, I reckon," replied a clear, deep voice, and a tall, loosely-built man, with a thin sinewed face, pleasant grey eyes, and a yellow beard and moustache, entered.

His face and hands were tanned a ruddy brown by the sun. He threw down his hat and riding-whip as he entered, and gave a sigh of satisfaction.

"Ezekiel wires Fellbridge shares have risen fourteen sixteenths," he said. "I've been down to Pittsburgh, 'Mandy, and folks are saying that you got in just in time, they'll boom presently. I've been around the place, too, and old John tells me. But what's up, 'Mandy? you don't look too brash to day."

"Oh! I'm well enough, Silas," she answered.

"Then what's worrying you?" he asked, glancing at the letter she still held in her hand.

"Nothing. Only Clara Maddison's nonsense," replied Mrs. Macdonald, shortly.

"I wouldn't let nonsense worry me, then," retorted Silas. "What's she been saying?"

"Oh! gossip—I—I don't believe a word of it," she answered, her face flushing.

Silas looked at her keenly. "What! the old thing," he said at last, in a hoarse voice. "I—I'd hoped you'd given it up, Mandy."

"I! What made you think so?" she answered. "I—this letter has about settled me. I shall go to Europe."

"After that chap," he said, a little scornfully.

"How dare you say so," she cried. "I always meant to go. No! I beg your pardon, Silas. It—it is because of what Clara has written about Rosalynn, that I've made up my mind to start."

There was silence for a minute. Silas Brookfield's face was full of pain, and his bosom heaved.

"You love him, then, you are certain of it, at last?" he said, presently.

"I—I don't know," she rejoined, hesitatingly. "Only—I can't bear to be thrown over."

"Thrown over?" muttered Silas, rising indignantly; "the miserable skunk—is he—was he—"

"Don't you get mad, now. It's all Clara's talk, maybe. She says he's courting a Miss Danvers, and people say he is going to marry her," replied Mrs. Macdonald.

"People say! Is that all?" said Silas scornfully. "It's not likely he'd throw you over, I guess, Mandy; but, oh! I did hope you'd forgotten him!"

There was bitter pain and mortification in Brookfield's voice. Mrs. Macdonald's heart smote her. He was such a good fellow, so honest and true-hearted. Why could she not love him? And for a moment, as she compared him to Rosalynn, she allowed he was the better man, and far better suited to be her husband than the English Earl.

"You have made up your mind to go, then? You—you will leave me?" he went on. "Mandy, I wonder if you have any idea what that means to me?"

"Silas, you know—what is the use of—of talking of that again?" she began, in a gentle voice.

"No use, none at all. If you are really bent on—on doing what you say. I've loved you all my life, dear. I loved you when I was a boy, and you a tiny girl. I loved you when I was a young fellow, and—and when you married Sandy Macdonald, though you didn't know it, it nearly killed me. I went out West, then, and didn't come back till I heard—that—that you wanted a friend."

"I know—I know. You've been real good to me, Silas, and if you were my brother I couldn't love you more than I do!" she whispered, tears filling her eyes.

"Then," he went on, "I found I loved you more than ever, and I hoped and prayed you might be brought to love me, and when you refused, and said it was no good, I hoped on till—till that fine English lord came, and then I saw it was all over. I'd begun half to hope again, but to-day that hope—my last has gone up. Once you go to Europe I'll never see Mandy Macdonald again."

"Never see me again, Silas! Yes you will," she cried.

"I may see a great English fine lady, my Lady Rosalynn, perhaps; but not Mandy Macdonald, not little Mandy Jennings—my cousin any more. Think that chap will care to recognise me as a relation? Not he! You'll bid farewell to all your own folk when you become his wife, my dear, you bet."

"I'll do no such thing, Silas Brookfield," she

cried, blushing crimson. "Do you think I'd ever disown my flesh and blood? Say."

"Not you. You're good and generous, but, like most women, you won't see when you don't want to see. Mandy, I'll tell you for the last time, Lord Rosalynn is like the rest, he wants your money!"

"He's rich enough!" she cried.

"Rich, is he? Are you sure? Is it a poor girl, Clara says he's after?" asked Silas.

"No, Clara calls her an heiress, but—"

"I thought so!" he cried, triumphantly.

"Mandy, why will you be so blind?"

"I'm not blind, and you're not over polite, Silas. Do you think no one would love me for myself, then?" she retorted.

"Heaven forbid! I know better than that," he answered, sadly; "but, Mandy, I've watched that fellow. I know him better than you do, and—"

"Well! well!" she interrupted, impatiently; "it doesn't follow that I shall marry him because I'm going to Europe, Silas. Perhaps before I get across he'll have married this girl."

"Not much!" sighed poor Silas.

"She's an heiress, you know, and he only wants money," retorted Amanda, mockingly.

"Perhaps," he replied, and his head fell on his breast. "Well, when do you start? You must look into things a bit before you go, you know, so that when you are married—"

"Silas, you won't give up my affairs, will you?" she murmured.

"Not as long as you are single; but when Rosalynn is your husband he'll take them off my hands, no doubt."

And then he entered into certain details respecting Amanda Macdonald's property, and explained to her how greatly its value had increased under his care.

She looked very sad when he left her that day. He had endeavoured without success to turn her from her resolve, to soften her heart towards him. It was useless. In June she was determined she would sail for Europe.

He accompanied her to New York when the time came, and would fain have crossed with her; but that could not be.

"Remember, I am always your friend, Mandy, darling," he faltered, as he bade her farewell. "Whatever happens, don't forget that, and if you want me, just cable, and I'll be over in a flash. And—and don't quite forget your old cousin, my dear." And then he kissed her, turned quickly away, and left her.

Amanda Macdonald's heart ached, and her eyes filled with tears as he departed. She felt quite lonely for the first few days on the voyage, though she had acquaintances on board, and speedily made friends with her fellow-passengers. Then the novelty of the situation, the prospect of seeing Europe, of visiting London and Paris, of meeting Rosalynn again, put all sad, regretful thoughts out of her head, and though her heart gave her a painful twinge now and then, she had quite regained her spirits before Liverpool was reached.

She halted for a day or two at that place to have a look round, determined to see all there was to be seen, and then, all alone, for she was the only one of the passengers by the *City of Edinburgh* who had stayed behind, she started for London.

It was her first journey in England, and she felt a little bewildered and strange when she arrived after dusk at her destination. It was all so different to anything she had experienced before; she was so ignorant of the ways and customs of English people, and she had not, when the train arrived at Euston, even made up her mind to what hotel she would go.

She half wished she had brought a servant who knew Europe with her, or that she had asked some American friend now in London to meet her.

She revolved the names of several hotels of which she had heard, over and over in her

mind, and when, after much pushing and struggling and anxiety as to the luggage, she found herself at last in a cab and all her belongings on the top, when the porter asked her where she wished to be driven, she gave the name of the first that came into her head, and sank back with a sigh of relief, delighted to be out of the noise and bustle of the crowded station.

The drive to the hotel she had named seemed a very long one, and the streets through which she was driven, densely crowded as they were, were poor and mean, and the people shabby, dirty and ill-clad.

She glanced out of the window of the cab in surprise. They were very different to what she had expected the streets of London to be, and when the cab drew up at the door of the hotel she thought it looked a shabby, dingy place, very dismal and fishy.

"Don't come up to our New York hotels any way," she thought, looking about doubtfully; "but it's only for one night. I'm not going to stay—I shall go on to Brighton to-morrow, and see Clara Maddison before I settle down, so it's all the same."

So she got out of the cab, the door of which was opened for her by a shabbily dressed waiter, who spoke with a strong foreign accent, and presently she found herself standing in the entrance hall of the hotel with her luggage in a heap beside her.

She looked around curiously. The hall was badly lighted, and there seemed no one about, in fact the place seemed empty.

"Rooms! Oh yes! What rooms would madame require? They were not very full, even at this season of the year. A bed-room and a sitting-room for the night! Certainly, madame could be accommodated; what luggage would she require taken upstairs?"

Mrs. Macdonald pointed to a large portmanteau. A waiter at once shouldered it, and following him, she was shown to the rooms she was to occupy, which were on the first floor.

"No 99," said the man, and pushed open the door. "Shall I put madame's portmanteau in the bed room?"

"If you please," she answered, her heart sinking a little, and a shiver coming over her, for there was something extremely depressing in the whole aspect of the place, and only very shame and the fact of being tired and hungry prevented her from having her luggage put into another cab and driving off to a different hotel.

"I will take supper in the public room immediately."

The man bowed, and carrying the portmanteau across the sitting-room, opened a door on the farther side with some little difficulty, and depositing his burden just within it left the apartment.

A few minutes later Amanda Macdonald came down to the dining-room, which she found nearly deserted, took her supper, consulted a time-table, and finding that a train left London for Brighton at nine o'clock in the morning made up her mind to travel by it, having taken a decided dislike to her present quarters, and as soon as her meal was finished she went upstairs again to her own apartments.

"What a horrid, mean place," she thought, with a shudder, as she went slowly up the echoing stair-case. "What a fool I was not to go to the Langham or the Grosvenor. I declare I'm not fit to travel alone. I quite lost my head to-day. What on earth induced me to tell them to drive to this place? It's enough to scare a body, it's so dismal and dark, and dingy. Well, I'm tired, anyhow. I shall sleep, I guess—sleep sound, and shan't do wrong in going to the Grand at Brighton to-morrow. Won't Clara be surprised to see me, that's all!"

Mrs. Macdonald entered the sitting room as she spoke, and closing the door carefully behind her, crossed the room and went into the bed room. It was a good sized one, but like the rest of the hotel, struck Mrs. Macdonald as being strangely dismal. The furniture was old,

and though massive, had seen better days; the curtains were sooty and faded, the carpet, that had once been a really handsome one, and that was still soft to the foot, was stained and patched in many places. There were no ornaments on the tables, no pictures nor engravings on the walls, the sad-coloured papering of which seemed grimed with the dust and soot of London. A large four-posted bed, of antique and forbidding appearance, stood in one corner of the room, hung with old-fashioned damask of a dark colour, and the curtains were carefully drawn round it, as if to shut out every breath of air, and every ray of light from its occupant.

A large wardrobe, a dressing-table with a tall, dim glass, a marble-topped wash-handstand and a few chairs, completed the furniture, and close to the door, where the waiter had deposited it, almost without entering, stood Mrs. Macdonald's portmanteau. A single jet of gas dimly lighted up the dreary apartment.

Mrs. Macdonald sunk into a chair, feeling nervous and uncomfortable. She was not by any means a timid woman, nor given to such feelings; but she certainly felt far from composed.

"Pah! I!" she ejaculated presently, "what a gloomy room, enough to frighten a body; so hot, too, I feel suffocating. I never was in such a dismal place. I wish I'd brought a maid over, as Silas advised. Poor old Silas!" and she sighed. "Wonder what he's doing now! Well, it's late, getting on to twelve. Every one's in bed in the house, it seems to me. The place is so still, not a sound but the footsteps on the sidewalk in the street, and they sound ghastly and dismal somehow! I'd better get to bed, I suppose, and go to sleep. I'm tired enough, anyway. Am I to sleep in this affair?" and she looked at the grim old bed. "It's solemn enough to scare one, and those curtains! How could anyone sleep with those curtains drawn around them like that! I must put them back. I should be choked in ten minutes behind them, a warm night like this!"

She approached the bed, and laying her hand on the curtain, paused. She felt a sudden thrill of terror, as if she dared not put them aside, then recovering herself; and feeling ashamed of her momentary cowardice, she drew them back with a sudden jerk.

A stifled cry of horror burst from her as she did so, and she started back, appalled.

On the bed lay an open coffin with the lid beside it, and in the coffin was the body of a woman.

"Good Heavens!" thought Mrs. Macdonald, looking wildly round. "What's made them put me into this room? What can I do?"

And she looked round the room to discover a bell pull; but no traces of such a thing were to be seen.

She shivered with terror, and her teeth chattered. Again she glanced at the face of the dead woman, a face so beautiful in death that even in her sudden terror Mrs. Macdonald could not but be struck by it, and the beauty had a soothing, pacifying effect on her. She trembled no longer.

"Poor thing! How lovely she must have been in life! Who—who can she be, I wonder. How comes she to have been left in this horrible house, all alone? What can her friends—her relations be thinking of," she thought. "Oh! and she shuddered again. What kind of people can they be to leave her here, alone?"

And Amanda Macdonald, being anything but a coward, being, in fact, a woman of very considerable courage, despite the momentary terror she had experienced at first sight of the corpse, so strangely and unexpectedly discovered by her, and who had been through scenes and witnessed sights in her life that would have tried the nerves of the strongest, shook off her terror completely, and advanced to the side of the bed, looking compassionately into the beautiful face lying so still and white before her, and a tear rolling down her

cheek, fell from it on to the forehead of the dead woman.

"It must have been hard to die so young! Who can she be?" she thought.

CHAPTER II.

SNATCHED FROM THE GRAVE.

It was a terrible situation. Brave as she was, Amanda Macdonald could not but feel awe-struck at finding herself so suddenly and unexpectedly in the presence of death.

What should she do? Doubtless through a mistake she had been put into the apartment where she now found herself; to all appearances every soul in the establishment was asleep; there was not even a bell in the room. It seemed as if her only plan were to retire to the sitting-room, and pass the few hours that remained till daybreak there as best she might.

She looked round for her candle as these thoughts passed through her mind. It stood on the dressing-table where she had placed it on entering, and with quick, cautious steps, walking as silently as if she feared a sound might awaken the quiet sleeper on the bed, she crossed the room and lighted it; then observing she had left the bed-curtains drawn back, she returned once more to the bedside to replace them in their old position.

As her eyes rested again on the face of the corpse she started, and an expression of doubt and terror passed over her own. Surely, surely, a moment before the eyes had been quite shut. The long dark-lashes had swept the marble cheeks!

Now, as the light of the candle fell on the placid face, she perceived the lids were slightly raised!

With a heart sobbing and beating violently, Mrs. Macdonald bent over the corpse and laid her hand gently on the waxen forehead, as she held the light closer to the pale face.

It was cold as ice; there was no movement, not the quiver of an eyelash, not the twitching of a nerve, as the light of the candle fell on the half-open eyes to confirm her impression; and with a sigh, half of disappointment, half of relief, she drew back.

"It was my fancy, I suppose," she thought. "I had not the light in my hand at first, that made the difference, no doubt. I'll go away now and stay in the next room till morning, and then won't I give these people a piece of my mind! The poor girl's friends, if she had any friends, must be strange people to leave her in this way!"

And taking up her candle Mrs. Macdonald passed from the bed-room into the sitting-room and sat down in a large arm-chair to wait for the morning.

A queer, uncomfortable, uneasy feeling, in spite of her courageous nature, gradually crept over her, and caused her great unrest. She fastened she heard sounds, crackings, ghastly rustlings, mysterious whisperings. A feeling that she was not alone, that some unseen, invisible presence was near her, tormented her, and after trying in vain to overcome the sensation, she started up. It was the gas, and looked boldly and inquiringly round the apartment.

To her surprise she perceived at the opposite side of the room a door, that owing to the dim light she had not previously noticed. It was on the latch and pushing it open, she found herself in another bedroom.

It was of the same size, and furnished much in the same way as the one she had just quitted, but was trimmer and cleaner. Instantly the truth flashed across Amanda's mind; this was the bedroom it had been intended she should occupy. The waiter had, she remembered, found difficulty in opening the door into the other room; no doubt it had been purposely fastened, and he had put her portmanteau into the wrong room. The mystery was cleared.

"I will move my belongings into this room

myself," she thought, "lock the door leading into that one," and she glanced at the room she had left, "and in the morning I—I can speak about this. The mistake, however, is easy to understand now, I'll do it at once. What a horrible adventure I have had! What would Silas say if he could see me?"

She turned quickly away into the sitting-room again, crossed it, and entered the other bedroom, set the candle down on the table, and with little difficulty, for she was as strong as she was handsome, carried the large portmanteau from one room to the other, entering again after a few minutes to take up her candle once more.

An irresistible desire to look once again at the beautiful white face in the coffin took possession of her, and again with noiseless footsteps she crossed the room, and drew back the bed-curtain.

The candle almost fell from her hand as she glanced again at the body. A strange subtle change had come over the face; it was no longer like the face of a corpse, but the face of one in a deep slumber. She could almost vow the lips and eyelids quivered, and that the chest heaved; and as she gazed in breathless expectation, all her doubts were set at rest; the hands that lay clasped together on the rounded bosom parted, the eyes opened, life returned, the shadow of death fled, and Amanda found herself gazing, not into the face of a corpse, but into the face of a living, breathing woman, whose wild frightened eyes met hers with terrified wonderment. Then with a sudden cry she rose, throwing up her hands with a despairing gesture.

"Oh, Heaven! where am I? What have they done to me?" she cried. "Oh, save me—save me!"

And she looked at Mrs. Macdonald with agonised entreaty in every feature.

By a very great effort Amanda, who for an instant had been thoroughly unnerved by what had taken place, regained her self-possession.

She put her hand kindly on the poor creature's shoulder.

"Calm yourself," she said. "I will help you."

"Heaven help you," was the reply, and tears rushed into the girl's eyes. "Where is he—my uncle—the doctor—the—and how do you come here? Who are you? Oh, hide me—hide me from them; they have failed this time, but another time they would succeed; do not give me up to them!"

And seizing Amanda's arm she clung to her frantically.

"For Heaven's sake control yourself—be calm," said Mrs. Macdonald. "There is no one here but me."

"No one here?" she answered, looking round with a shudder. "Yet it was here—in this room—on this bed—I died—yes—died, and they put me into that coffin. Ah!" and she sunk her voice to a whisper, pointing with a thin white hand across the room. "They are there—see!"

Fearing for the sanity of her companion Amanda glanced uneasily in the direction she indicated, and perceived a curtain or portiere hanging against the wall that she had not before noticed.

"Behind, there is a door, it leads into his room," she whispered. "Take me away. Oh! let us go from here!"

Mrs. Macdonald crossed the room, and drawing aside the curtains scooped to examine the door it revealed. It was without a handle, and was locked evidently from the other side.

She looked up; there was an old-fashioned bolt above. Instantly she fastened it, and then she listened carefully. All was silent in the room beyond.

"We cannot be interrupted now," she said, returning to the girl, who crouched, shuddering and trembling by the bed, with her eyes fixed on the door. "Are you strong enough to walk? Can you come with me? Here, let me help you," and she passed her strong

arm round the other's feeble form. "We will leave his place."

"Yes, yes. How good you are—how kind! let us go, do not let them see me. Oat promise, swear you will not give me up to them—you will not leave me, and I will tell you all my story."

The poor girl's agony and terror, and her wild entreaties for protection, had a powerful effect on Mrs. Macdonald's warm, generous heart. There was no mistaking their truthfulness, and not for an instant did she doubt that the victim of some cruel wrong, some foul plot, was before her, whom it was her duty to help and succour.

Gently she reassured the terror-stricken girl, and promised her aid and protection. Then, having let her into the further bedroom, she looked and bolted the door of the room they had quitted, and settling the girl on the sofa, after wrapping her in shawls and giving her a strong dose of cal-valatile, she sat down to consider what should be done next.

"There is no time to be lost," said the girl, nervously. "What day is it?"

"Thursday, June the twenty eighth," said Amanda.

"Thursday! then I died three days ago! Ah! I had lost all count of time. I knew not how many days and nights I might have been lying there!" (and she shuddered). "I felt all numbed and frozen, but I can remember some things, madame. Yes, I can remember them saying 'she is dead,' and the feeling of despair that came over me when they left me, and I heard them go out and lock the door behind them. I tried to move, I tried to speak. I could not. Something seemed to weigh on me, to keep me back, to render me powerless. Then for awhile, all seems blank. The first that I remember again is the sensation of something warm falling on my forehead. Strange, from that moment I seemed to revive. I moved, I opened my eyes. A light flashed before them—power came back to my limbs. I started up and saw you, my deliverer! Oh! if they find me! What day did you say? Thursday. Ah! then they would have buried me to-morrow, for I remember my uncle saying to his friend, 'On Saturday, the thirtieth, we must be in Liverpool. Oh! let us go from this, dear lady, at once.'"

"We shall do so, my dear," replied Amanda, kindly. "Now don't you fret. Have you no friends—no father or mother?"

"No, no, I have no one," she answered. "Even the man I call-uncle is not really my uncle."

"Then you are your own mistress, and you are in a free country; by what right do these people—but there! I will ask you no questions now, you are not fit to answer them. It is morning—nearly four o'clock. At eight we will leave. I am going to Brighton. Are you likely to be recognised there? to meet—"

"I? oh! no. I have been but five weeks in England, madame, and a fortnight of that time in tel."

"That is fortunate. Presently I must dress you. Fortunately, we are the same height and there are clothes in my portmanteau. Now be still for a time. I will get all you want; you'll have as much to do as you can get through to get to Brighton; I guess. I must make haste."

She stood a moment thinking, and then opened the door into the other bedroom, and again listened attentively for sounds from the apartment beyond. All was still.

She glanced inquiringly round the apartment, and seeing a large heavy door-weight of old-fashioned make and size, took it up, wrapped it hastily in a shawl, put it in the coffin, and placed the lid which lay on the bed in its place. Then she took a knife from her pocket, one of those large, useful knives containing various instruments, a gift of Shaw Brockfield, without which she

never travelled in her own country, and with the screw-driver proceeded to screw it down.

This took some little time, and more than once she started in terror, fancying she heard steps in the further room; but it was completed at last, and with a fervent "thank Heaven!" Amanda put away her knife, undid the bolt over the secret door, and passing into the sitting-room, locked and bolted the bedroom door securely from without.

"Now we had better dress you," she said, and she proceeded to array her new friend in her own clothes, finishing by putting her on a long heavy cloak, and tying a thick veil over her face, concealing as far as she could her wonderful masses of dark auburn hair.

"There," she said, "I think I have disguised you very effectually. Now I am going to order coffee; but what is it. Are you faint, are—?" for her companion had turned ashy pale; and stood with her eyes fixed and staring, and her lips parted.

"Listen!" she whispered.

Amanda listened, and her head grew cold. There were footsteps, and a key turned in the lock of the door beyond the bedroom. There were low voices—whisperings. They had been but just in time!

"The funeral! They come to take me away—to bury me!" whispered the girl in ghastly tones.

"Hush! fear nothing; you are safe," replied Amanda, taking her cold hand, her heart beating fast. Would they open the coffin? Would her arifice be discovered?

She listened intently, and presently, to her relief, she heard them lift the coffin from the bed and carry it across the room and through the further apartment; and presently the slow, heavy footsteps of the bearers were heard descending the stairs.

Mrs. Macdonald rushed to the window; her companion followed her. Below in the street was a hearse and a single mourning coach. Presently the bearers appeared, the coffin was placed in it, two middle-aged men in deep mourning got into the coach, and the procession moved off at a quick pace.

"Gone!" cried Amanda, with a sigh of relief, turning to her friend, whose face was still ghastly pale. "Now for some coffee. You must take it, and we will be off, too."

Coffee was brought, and with difficulty the trembling girl was persuaded to partake of it. A cab was ordered, the bill paid, and then Mrs. Macdonald, giving her companion her arm, proceeded with her downstairs.

She felt her trembling in every limb as they descended, and could feel her start nervously at the sight of each new passer by.

"There were only two of them there," she whispered, nervously. "Where is the third—the new doctor? He was not with them."

"Courage!" replied Mrs. Macdonald. "He is most probably far enough away, at any rate, if he were to meet you he could not possibly recognise you. There is no danger, the cab is here. In a moment we shall be off. Get in," and she put her into the cab, and jumped in after her. "Drive on," she cried.

The driver started, drove on a little way, then, to the terror of Mrs. Macdonald's companion, stopped.

"Where to, ma'am?" he asked.

"I—I am going to Brighton. Drive to the railway-station. I want to catch the nine o'clock train," replied Amanda.

They were but just in time. Two minutes after they took their seats the train started.

CHAPTER III.

AN AUTOCRATIC LOVER.

On a lovely May day, bright, warm, and cloudless, a week previous to Mrs. Macdonald's departure from New York, when the hedges in merry England were white with blossoms, and birds sang their sweetest amidst the fresh green foliage of the trees, brooks babbled gaily, and lambs frisked in

the fields, the whole of the racing world, besides a multitude of holiday-makers, was assembled on Epsom downs to witness the great event of the sporting year—the struggle for the Derby.

Never had there been a larger or more brilliant gathering within the memory of the oldest habitué of the race course. All sorts and conditions of men and women were there represented, from his grace the Duke and her grace the Duchess, with their fashionable following and gorgeous turnout, to the lowly costermonger and his friends who had been conveyed to the spot in the homely market-cart drawn by the long suffering mule. Princes, lords, and commons, men, women, and children of every class and calling, and many nationalities, were crowded together on the breezy turf, eager to catch a glimpse of the great race, still more eager for a day's pleasure, under the blue sky and on the soft green grass, far from the noise and dust and din of busy London.

The great race was run. The struggles so long looked forward to, and with such eager interest, was over. There was an excited rushing hither and thither by the surging crowd. A roar of voices, shouts, laughter!

Fortunes had changed hands during those few moments, the rich had become poor, and the poor rich. The spendthrift and gambler had parted with his last shilling, or maybe, filled his pockets with coveted gains. Already the grand carriages with their gaily-dressed occupants, the gorgeous drags and four-in-hands were beginning to leave the course, and the humbler portion of the spectators to wend their way to the railway-station, when a party of gentlemen slowly sauntered across the grass and paused to observe the stream of brilliantly dressed and distinguished visitors, who were beginning to issue from the Grand Stand.

"A surprise for everyone, eh, Rossallyn?" said a stout florid man, with a pair of glasses slung over his shoulders, to his companion.

"Yes, to every one, I suppose," replied the tall, fair-haired man addressed, calmly, "to me as well as to the rest."

"Ay, ah! You backed Silvershield, didn't you?" said the other, curiously.

"Yes; came in a bad third. Well! It's no new thing for an outsider to win; Silvershield, the thing's been known before. Are you off? Good-bye! that at Harley House last night. Good-bye."

And Lord Rossallyn turned carelessly away, and his friend passed on.

"Takes it mighty coolly," said Colonel Stair to another as he walked away. "Rossallyn has lost twenty thousand on Silvershield, if he's lost a penny; and he's pretty well dipped already. What's up? has he—"

"Oh! trust Rossallyn! He's got some plan in his head. He sees his way out of it. He's a devil of a fellow—been going the pace for years past. Can't understand how he stood it so long."

"Came into a large fortune with the title, I fancy, and old Lady Forth, his aunt, left him a tidy sum," replied Stair. "Curious chap. Handsome, clever, good at billiards, splendid shot, excellent rider, good at everything all round, a dry, amusing dog, too, and yet do you know, Wilmington," and the Colonel's jolly face grew grave, "I don't believe the fellow's got a friend in the world."

"Hum! No. He's not a favourite, that is, not with men," replied the other.

"Heaven help the woman with whom he is a favourite, if that's what you mean," retorted the Colonel. "Come! the drag's waiting, let's be off. I'm glad it's over, though we've had a jolly day."

Roderick, Lord Rossallyn's, had meanwhile lounged slowly towards the Grand Stand, and was now engaged in conversation with a couple of other acquaintances.

His tall, well-built form and faultless attire, his distinguished air and manner made him a person of mark in the crowd, and many

were the eyes turned on him and the smiles and bows he received from numerous acquaintances, all of which he returned with a perfect grace and a certain winning dignity, cold yet fascinating. His deep steel-grey eyes, and cleanly shaven face, with the clear cut regular features, expressing not one jot or tittle of disappointment or concern for the defeat of the favourite, or the loss of the large sum of money which, as all the world knew, he had sustained.

"I say, Rossalyn, hard hit, eh, old chap?" said a dark, short heavily-built man, with a thick black moustache and small dark eyes. "Denoed bad luck, wasn't it?"

"Yes, as you say," replied Rossalyn, glancing carefully round, and bowing with a graceful ease and charming smile to a group of fair friends; "a denoed bore, Graham; but such is life!"

"You—you take it very coolly," said the other, looking a little annoyed.

"Would you have me tear my hair, and bewail my lot, then?" answered Rossalyn, with a short laugh.

"Of course not; but you seem so dashed unconcerned, my boy, and—and—"

"And I ought to know and feel that I'm a ruined man. Is that what you mean, George? Well, I might have felt so the day before yesterday, but—"

And he paused with a smile.

"By Jove!" cried the other, with an admiring look. "You don't mean to say—"

"I do, though," and he laughed a dry, harsh, mocking laugh, that ill accorded with the polished smile on his lips. "I've done it, George, I—I have consented to sacrifice myself on the altar of Hymen. Ha, ha!"

"Ah," sighed the other, looking at him keenly, "the—the fair widow?"

"No, my boy, a trick worth two of that," he laughed in reply.

"What! You've thrown her over, then?" cried the other.

"No—nothing so foolish, George. It's as well to have two strings to one's bow, you know. Things remain as they were in that quarter," he replied.

"Who then, if I may ask?" began the other. "As—as we are friends—comrades—and—"

"And both in the same boat," interrupted Rossalyn, laughing again, "you think I might enlighten you. Very well, I'll give you a hint. A certain lovely creature—a bud from the country, young, innocent, beautiful and with twenty thousand a year, George, the beauty of the season, the—"

"What, Miss—"

"Hush, yes, I see you've guessed it. The heiress, Graham. Now I suppose you'll propose to congratulate me?"

"Well, certainly, I," began Captain Graham.

"Don't, then; it's a matter of necessity. I've done it because I'm obliged. I—I've no taste for matrimony and domestic joys, George, as you know," he replied, in a moody tone.

"You—you're hard to please," began the other.

"Perhaps," answered Rossalyn, in the same tone.

"By Jove! She's lovely, oharming, beautiful, as well as rich," cried Graham, enthusiastically. "Most fellows would call you a lucky dog, Roderick."

"Yes, maybe. She's a lady, too, though a country-bred one, but we'll soon polish her. Better than the widow on the whole, George. By jove! there's a chance for you, George!"

And he laughed long and mockingly. His laughter drew on him the attention of several bystanders and the angry glances of a stranger, who for some minutes had been standing near him, kept by the crowd that was still issuing from the Grand Stand from reaching his conveyance.

He was a fine strongly-built man, some eight and twenty years of age, with a bronzed face, clear, keen, hazel eyes, short dark moustache and hair, and a countenance, which, if

not positively handsome, was yet very pleasing, open and honest. There was something a little peculiar, an English rather than foreign, in his appearance, and he seemed unused to the ways and people around him. His eyes fixed themselves with a stern expression on Rossalyn, whose last few sentences had reached his ears as he stood close to him in the crowd.

"We shall miss you from the ranks of bachelorhood, sadly, my lord," said Captain Graham, "and though I think you are to be envied I have no intention of following in your footsteps, or consoling the fair widow."

"Envied!" retorted Rossalyn, sneeringly. "Remember, I give up my liberty, George, that first and greatest of blessings, for which the great and good in all ages have fought and died. Envied! Fancy me tied to a girl, a country-bred miss of eighteen! She'll bore me to extinction, George, lovely, excellent though she be. I am not the man to submit to the chains of matrimony without being chafed by them—"

"Psha! Love will lighten them," laughed the other.

"Love!" retorted Rossalyn, with infinite scorn, "are you doting, Graham? I have outgrown all that rubbish years ago. Love has nothing to do with the matter; it is an affair of money. She brings me a fortune. I give her a coronet!"

"A fair exchange; but can you get up a little tendresse Roderick? a little sentiment? It would enliven the whole thing immensely."

"Couldn't, dear boy; you ask too much. I will sacrifice myself with due decorum; but I can do no more. By Jove! she will have the best of it, Graham. She'll be my lady, have a fine position, diamonds, the world at her feet and all a woman cares for! She'll have to give up nothing, whilst I—"

"You'll have the money, and she being young and all that may look for a little love as well as title and position," interposed the other. "However, I'm not going to quarrel with you about that, old fellow. You've done a good stroke of business. When is it to be, eh?"

"As soon as may be. The old grandfather has been dead only twelve months as yet, and I suppose there'll be a good deal of business to get through first. I've a little time before me still. Why, there's Desirée Vaumont and Martinez—the new soprano. Handsome woman, isn't she, and has a splendid voice. She made a wonderful sensation in Berlin. Well, Graham, let's be off. There's old Bradford and the Countess going, and Lady Isabel, and old Coke. The general has lost five pounds at least, and is as sulky as a bear. I pity poor Lady Izzy. What she married him for Heaven only knows. No money, nor beauty, nor love, there. Come along, the drag's ready. Let's be off."

And the two men made their way through the crowd, that was now growing thinner, to their drag.

"Nice fellow that," mused the young stranger, looking after them. "Who is the poor girl he's been discussing so freely and he's going to deceive into marrying him? By jingo! it's a shame! How can a man talk so of the woman he is going to make his wife? He cannot know the meaning of honour or honesty! And yet he's a lord. One of the pillars of the British aristocracy, I suppose. I wonder he isn't ashamed of himself. Thank Heaven, where I come from one don't think of marriage, or talk of the girl we are about to marry in that strain. An heiress and a beauty. Young, too, and she's going to throw herself away on that fellow. To marry him for his title, as he declares. I don't believe a young, innocent girl should do such a thing. I wonder who she is!"

And threading his way slowly through the people Mr. Jim Rogers, for such was the young man's name, made his way towards a group of hansom cabs drawn up at a little distance, entered one, and was driven off in the direction of London.

"It's been a fine race," he thought, as he lay back in the hansom and watched with much interest and amusement the fun of the road as he was driven along. "I never saw anything to equal it; it was worth a voyage to England to witness. I wish I hadn't come across these fellows and heard their talk; it's given a bad flavour to the whole thing, and will spoil my reminiscences of the day. Rossalyn, Lord Rossalyn, that was the fellow's name. I shan't forget it. A fine man with a handsome—but, oh! what a cruel face! Poor girl! Ah! there they go!"

And Rossalyn's drag passed Jim Rogers' humble hansom at a swinging pace.

Rossalyn was driving, and beside him sat Captain Graham, and the drag was filled with gaily-dressed women and fashionable looking men; but somehow Jim Rogers turned away his eyes from the party, and was glad when they passed on out of sight, and the sounds of their boisterous laughter was drowned by the noise of the hurrying vehicles.

"Poor girl!" he thought again, with a sigh.

The dinner after the Derby was a gay and noisy one, and it was late when the party separated. Rossalyn, spite of his losses and the sacrifice he was meditating, and at which he more than once hinted during the repast, was the gayest of the gay; his wit had never been more sparkling, his jokes better, his conversation more brilliant. Men envied him his ready repartees, his store of anecdote, his quickness of retort. Women admired and flattered him. He was indeed the most perfect of hosts, the prince of entertainers, the most polished of men.

Never had a more delightful repast been known than this dinner after the race, and the guests, as they bade adieu to their host at a late hour, were loud in their thanks and expressions of gratification. The day had been a perfect one, and the evening's entertainment had crowned it.

"God! that's over, thank Heaven," said Rossalyn, moodily, as the last guest left. "Why does one give these parties, I wonder. Never was so glad in my life to get rid of the people—never was so bored. George is growing more stupid every day. He asked them, and left out one or two who might have saved us from being deadly dull. Well! it's time to go home now. A fine night! I'll walk, the air will do me good after the heat in that room."

So putting on his hat and a light overcoat, Rossalyn sauntered out into the street.

CHAPTER IV.

BROUGHT TO BOOK.

He felt moody and disgusted. The day had been one of intense anxiety to him and the loss he had sustained, though he hid his feelings perfectly, had dealt him a staggering blow.

Since the day he had come into his title very unexpectedly some six years previously, by the death from accident of his cousins, he had led a reckless, dissipated life, and of late, brilliant and fascinating as he undoubtedly was, the world had begun to look a little shyly at him.

Loss after loss during the last year had fallen on him; he had never backed a horse but that it had been scratched or beaten, a billiard player or a prize fighter but that the day went against him; the luck at cards that once had been so conspicuously his had deserted him. He had dissipated his fortune in a thousand extravagances. Money was getting harder and harder to find. The Jews even were looking askance at him, and didn't care for his signature even on stamped paper.

Marriage seemed the only way open to him to retrieve his fortune; and marriage, as he had intimated to his friend Captain Grant, was not at all to his taste. Beggars however, he felt, could not be choosers; so he had taken

the plunge, or very nearly taken it. The young heiress of whom he had spoken so confidently and so cynically to his friend, was, he knew on perfectly reliable authority, prepared to accept him, in fact considered herself bound to do so, and his word was almost pledged to make her his wife. Almost, but not quite; he had not burned his boats behind him, he had left himself a way of escape.

If Silver Shield had won the Derby that day, and he had landed the large sums he had hoped, instead of losing all he had, it is possible he might have backed out of his bargain, or at any rate held back from it for some time longer. As it had turned out, there was no time for delay, he had no choice but to make everything sure on the morrow.

"After all, perhaps, it is not such a hard fate," he muttered to himself. "As George said just now, most men would envy me, but, hang it!" and an ugly look passed over his face. "I've no wish to bind myself, to find myself tied hand and foot. No; but it's my fate, there's no use kicking against it. Twenty thousand a year. Not bad—worth giving up something for, I suppose. She is pretty, too; though not in the style I admire most. But what is beauty? what is sweetness? It falls on one—one gets tired, satiated with it in time. Don't I know it?"

He groaned and pulled his hat down over his eyes, and walked on slowly and thoughtfully, the moon shining brightly and making all around as clear as day; quite unconscious that, as he left the restaurant where he had dined, a figure had slipped out of the deep shadow of the portico, and was following him at a respectful distance.

Presently he paused to light a cigar, and looking up he beheld someone standing before him—a broad-shouldered, middle-aged man, whose black hair was streaked with grey, and whose deep-set black eyes glimmered and gleamed brightly between the dark overhanging eyebrows. He wore a soft, dark felt hat and a frock coat, and when he smiled displayed a row of shining white teeth behind a thick black moustache.

He raised his hat politely, and with graceful gesture, half-defiant, half-submissive. Lord Rossalyn started almost imperceptibly as his eyes fell on him, and even in the moonlight it could be seen that he had turned very pale.

"At length I have the felicity of meeting Mr. Boderick Calvert again, after so many years—or I should now say Lord Rossalyn," he said in good English, but with a strong foreign accent. "I fear his lordship has forgotten me; permit me to recall myself to his memory. I am—"

"I remember you very well," interrupted Rossalyn, looking up quickly as if he did not wish the other to pronounce his name.

"I am glad to find old friends are not quite forgotten, though old ties seem to be—to have been for so many years," replied the man, meaningly.

"What—what do you want with me? What have you followed—come here for?" asked Rossalyn, in a low voice of concentrated fury, and then he looked suddenly around.

"No," said the man, coolly, laying a strong hand on Rossalyn's arm, "do not call the police. It would be a bad move on your part, and is unnecessary; besides, it would only precipitate matters and prevent our coming to an understanding."

Rossalyn's head fell on his breast.

"What do you want?" he asked again, fiercely.

"Half an hour's talk with your lordship—a modest request, surely, after so many years' separation. Let me see; eight years ago I first met Mr. Boderick Calvert at Accordia, and—"

"Hush! follow me. We are close to my house," said Rossalyn, hurriedly.

"Certainly," replied the man with a bow, and he followed Rossalyn.

"I bring you news of one who was—who no doubt is—very dear to you," said the man in a

smoothing, oily tone, when they found themselves in his private room—an apartment richly furnished and hung with pictures of real worth, besides sketches of merit and adorned with many rare articles of *bric à brac*. "The news I bring—" continued the stranger.

"Hush!" said Rossalyn, warningly, and he crossed the room, locking the door carefully by which they had entered; then he lighted a lamp that stood on an inlaid writing-table by the window, and with an inquiring gaze confronted his visitor. The man returned his look unflinchingly, but keeping his right hand within the bosom of his coat as if he feared foul play.

Rossalyn observed him with a scornful smile.

"We are in England, in a civilized country; you need not fear," he said. "Speak, what have you to tell me? What news do you bring me, and of whom?"

There was an agony of suppressed anxiety in his tone. The Italian saw it and smiled cruelly.

"Ah! no wonder you are anxious," he said. "It is long—very long since you heard of her."

"Of her?" repeated Rossalyn in a low, terrified tone.

"Yes, of her," answered the man, calmly, appearing to enjoy the torture his companion was suffering.

"I heard three years ago, that—that—" he began.

"That she was dead. Yes, but what you heard was false," replied the man, coolly.

"She—she is alive then?" asked Rossalyn, who was now deadly pale.

"Yes, she is alive," returned the other. "You were too hasty in your conclusions, Lord Rossalyn, your inquiries were too careless."

There was silence between the two men for some moments.

"Why have you come to tell me this?" asked Rossalyn, abruptly, his eyes gleaming with sudden anger. "Why have you waited till now? Why are you here?"

The Italian laughed.

"Can you ask—can you not guess?" he said. "What should bring me here beyond the wish to give you news that must—that should be of importance to you? My information has a certain value to you, and to me."

"Of what value is it to me, thank you," retorted Rossalyn.

The other man eyed him strangely. "If what I have heard is true, it should be of value to you," he replied; "to me it is certainly of some worth. Knowledge is power, I need not remind you."

Rossalyn shivered, though the perspiration stood in great beads on his forehead.

"Sit down," he said, pointing to a chair, "tell me all, and let us see what this information may really be worth both to you and to me. You have your price for it, I suppose?"

"My lord, as your lordship knows, I am a poor man," said the other, deprecatingly, though his eyes shone with a greedy light.

"Ah! the old, the universal complaint. So am I," replied Rossalyn, scornfully.

The other laughed incredulously.

"You do not believe me—but so it is. Yet we may come to terms. Now tell your tale and be quick, for time presses," went on Rossalyn.

And in a low, soft tone, the stranger began his story, speaking in his own tongue.

An hour later and his noble host opened the door of his mansion, and, looking carefully around, let his guest depart.

The sun was rising, and its early beams shone with a faint lustre on the young Earl's livid, haggard face.

"And when—when?" he whispered, looking eagerly into the Italian's dark, unmoved countenance ere he left him.

"Soon, but impossible to say precisely when," he replied, "but we shall meet again,

my lord, at the place of which I spoke; till then *Adio, a rivederci*." And he bowed gracefully and courteously with a bland smile to Rossalyn.

"Yes, we shall meet again once more, and for the last time," he muttered, as he watched the Italian on his way and till he had passed out of the square, and then he closed the heavy door silently behind him, and with an unsteady footstep regained the sitting-room.

He poured out a glass of spirits from a flask, with a trembling hand, and drank it eagerly, looking dazed and bewildered; then he sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

"The brute!" he murmured. "In his power! Well! in a little while, if he keeps his word, we shall be quits, brothers in adversity; ha! ha!"

And he laughed bitterly.

The clock on the chimney-piece struck five, but still Rossalyn sat where he was, buried in thought. The world was beginning to wake up, there were the sounds of voices in the streets, of wheels in the roadway, the birds chirped and twittered in the branches of the trees in the square, doors were opened and shut in the upper regions of the house; and then the young Earl made his way to his bed-room and threw himself, dressed as he was, on the bed.

(To be continued.)

CURRENTS of water serve to a vast extent the purpose of distributing seeds. Walnut, bitter-nut and pecan trees are found close to streams, where they drop their nuts into the passing flood, to be carried far away and start other groves perhaps hundreds of miles distant. Tree seeds of many sorts are carried by oceanic currents.

THE most costly painting in the world is the "Assidei Madonna," a work of Raphael, painted for the Ansidei family of Perugia in 1506. It represents the Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist, and St. Nicholas, the Bishop of Bari. The work was bought for and is now in the National Gallery of London, the trustees of which paid the sum of £70,000, the highest price ever paid for any picture.

In Amsterdam there is a regular orange-peel mart, where saucers full of peel are set out upon long tables, and tasters go among them selecting for purchases. Such experience have these men that they can tell, by breaking and smelling a bit of peel, just what part of the world it comes from; and that from Curaçoa always commands a higher price than any other. The bitter orange peel which is produced in Curaçoa makes the aromatic liqueur which bears the name of that island, but which is really made by the Dutch in Holland.

THE bicycle is destined to play an important part in warfare. The German Government is training some of its soldiers in the use of the wheel for scouting parties, and for the delivery of despatches. In a recent contest between cavalrymen and wheelmen, the cavalrymen beat the wheelmen only six minutes in a twenty-four mile race, between the towns of Stronsberg and Weissensee. For service requiring secrecy from the watchful eye of an enemy the bicycle possesses several advantages over the horse.

THE oldest bit of slang which can be traced to an historical origin is said to be "He is a brick." Pindar, in his "Life" of Lycurgus, gives an account of the visit of an ambassador from Epirus to the city of Sparta, who saw much to admire and praise. But he wondered greatly that Sparta was not a walled town, and asked the explanation of its lack of defensive works. No answer was returned that day. Early the next morning, however—for the Spartan's rose at dawn—the Epirote was awakened, and conducted to the field of exercise outside the city, where the army of Sparta was drawn up in battle array. "There," said Lycurgus, "are the walls of Sparta, and every man is a brick."

FACETIE.

Hark to day and gone to morrow. The man who borrows five shillings from you.

Gone without saying. The young man too bashful to pop the question.

"Is Fletcher sure his wife's pocket is dead?" "He must be. I see his off-ring fifty dollars reward for it."

The wife who can retain a sure hold upon her husband's heart will never have occasion to take a grip on his hair.

"Have you heard the eight-year-old German boy violate?" "Oh, yes; twelve years ago in Berlin."

There are two classes of fools in the world. Those who make fools of themselves, and those whom Nature has saved the trouble.

There is nothing in the world more aggravating to a man with a secret than to meet people who have no curiosity.

"My mamma's got whiter teeth than your mamma," said Allie. "She'd oughter have. She changes 'em oftener," retorted Maudie.

Ma (to Ethel, after church): "Why so thoughtful, Ethel?" "I was thinking why the minister always says 'lastly' in the middle of his sermon."

DAUGHTER: "Well, I think Fred is a man in a thousand." FATHER: "Quite so; but he thinks himself the other nine hundred and ninety-nine."

WILSON: "That mule I bought from you kicked me. You said he was safe." WALLACE: "Well, so he is. I didn't say you would be, though."

A French scientist says that insects are, unable to distinguish one object from another by its outward shape. The bald-headed man knows better.

WIFE (pouting): "You used to call me a duck." HUSBAND (gruffly): "Umph, more like a fish. You wouldn't get into half the trouble if you kept your mouth shut."

That was a quick-witted hostess who said, in response to a guest's flattering comment upon her dinner, "Oh, it's entirely a matter of taste!"

SARCO: "There is one thing that every woman likes to have a finger in. Rodd: "What's that?" SARCO: "An engagement ring."

"Whatever made you make Brachina a present of a pocket-comb? He's as bald as a billiard-ball." "That's just it; I want to make him think I never noticed it."

WIFE: "You pretend to know a great deal about housekeeping. Can you dress a turkey?" HUSBAND: "No; but you must acknowledge that I dress a goose very well."

HE: "You're heartless and cruel. Why did you go on encouraging me? Why did you not tell me you were married?" SHE: "But how was I to know you were single?"

CONTRIBUTOR: "What kind of jokes do you prefer?" EDITOR: "Leap-year jokes." CONTRIBUTOR: "Why?" EDITOR: "Because it takes them four years to come round again."

AUNT JANE: "Who is this uncle that Henry talks about—the uncle, you know, with whom Henry left his overcoat and watch, too, I believe? Uncle George? Uncle? uncle? Oh, yes! He belongs to a collateral branch of Henry's family."

LADY (engaging nurse): "Now, can you bestow some affection upon the child as well as carry out the ordinary duties of a nurse?" NURSE: "Certainly! The little dear shall have that also; but it will be ten shillings a month extra, ma'am!"

YOUNG HUSBAND: "Don't you quite understand how to cook it, darling?" YOUNG WIFE (busy with cookery-book): "Yes, it's all quite clear; but it says, 'First clean the turkey,' and I was wondering whether one should use toilet or regular scouring soap."

HE: "Well, how do you like the engagement ring I sent you?" SHE: "It's beautiful, Jack." HE: "I know you'd like it. All the other girls did."

EDITOR Illustrated Paper: "Did you succeed in getting a snapshot at Mrs. Cleveland?" CAMERA-BEND: "Yes; but I couldn't get the baby." EDITOR: "Never mind about that. Any baby will do."

A victor who wanted his boots blackened said to his host on retiring: "I'll put my boots outside the door of my room." To which the host naively replied: "All right; nobody will touch them."

VOICE (at the telephone): "Major, will you please bring your family and take supper with us next Sunday?" SERVANT girl replies back through telephone: "Master and mistress are not in at present, but they can't come to supper, as it's my Sunday out."

The burglar who goes through the second-floor rooms while the family is at supper on the first floor is considerate. He doesn't wait until after midnight and then rattle about and wake everybody up, as some burglars do. Still people continue to find fault with him.

"Pray, policeman," said a saucy gem from the Emerald Isle to one of the city police, "why do you wear that thing round your wrist?" "To show I'm on duty," said he. "Och, by the powers, I thought that it was because ye didn't know yer right hand from yer left," said the sly mix.

A NONCEMAN who was sitting on the hill-side with his shepherd, observed the sheep reposing in the coldest situation, and said to him: "John, if I were a sheep I would lie on the other side of the hill." "Aye, my lord," answered John, "but if ye had been a sheep, ye would have had mair sense."

An Irishman, of course, getting upon a street car, found one place vacant, which he proposed to occupy. "Sure," said he, with a twinkle in his eye, "I came just in the nick of time." "How is that?" "Arrah! If I was to come now, I shouldn't find a single seat."

"WHAT are you sitting on that step for?" asked the policeman. "Why, I live here, and I'm locked out." "Well, why don't you ring up the man of the house?" "I am the man of the house myself," and the way he said it indicated his chances of getting in might be better if he had been the woman.

THE DOCTOR.—HUSBAND: "What did the doctor say, Mary?" WIFE: "Not much. He asked me to put out my tongue." HUSBAND: "Yes." WIFE: "And he said, 'Overworked.'" HUSBAND (with a long breath of relief): "Then you'll have to give it a rest. I guess that doctor knows his business."

Mrs. SPOONER (on being introduced to Adored One's Mother): "Pardon me, madam, but have we not met before? Your face seems strangely familiar." Adored One's Mother: "Yes, I am the woman who stood up before you for three miles in a tramcar the other day while you sat reading a paper."

A GENTLEMAN'S servant called at the doctor's. "Pleased, sir, will you come at once to my master?" The doctor, who was just stepping into bed, threw his clothes on and hurried off to see his patient. "What is the matter?" he inquired. "I have a couple of friends here to-night, and we want a fourth man here to take a hand at a rubber."

"I THINK I have a place for you," said the manager. "Yes?" said the fallen star. "Yes. You see, in the last act of Brownson's new piece the villagers organize a mob and hang the villain in effigy." "Do you think I'll take any such part as that? Leading a mob of snipers? Why, man, when we played in *Macbeth* I was called before the curtain—" "I don't intend you to lead the snipers. You are to be the effigy."

A TYPOGRAPHICAL error which deserves a place in the list of amusing aberrations of printers in which the words "bearing the pain with fortitude" were written, but which appeared in print, "bearing the piano with fortitude." A great truth, though not always a textual one, is sometimes concealed in a typographical error.

"It is something strange," said a gentle man, one day, "but my wife and I never like the same thing. It is only necessary for me to express a fondness for anything for her to take a dislike to it." "Not always, my dear," she replied, "I like you very well, and I know you think a great deal of yourself."

BAGLEY (to newly imported servant): "You never saw a lobster before, did you, Bridget?" Bridget: "Sure, an' Ol' ve saw hundreds at the red things shwimmia' in the creeks at the old country." Bagley: "But lobsters are green, Bridget, before they are put in boiling water." Bridget (not to be put down): "Sure, an' there's coffin' springs roight in the creeks, sur."

"WELL, Pat," said a friend, meeting him on the street after he had been suffering with a severe and prolonged attack of the grippe, "I hear you've been having a pretty hard time of it." "Faith, an' I have," said Pat. "An' it's the right name they give to it, too, for when it onest takes hold of a man it's no wind to let go. It took me shraa wakes to fule better after I was intirely well."

A WOMAN'S heart, even when most obdurate, may relent. Margaret was asserting in the nursery that she never, never meant to marry. "Very well, you shall not," said her papa; and going to the door he called out to an imaginary suitor, "Go away, man! Margaret doesn't want you." "Call him back!" cried Margaret. "Let me see what he looks like?"

"Who is that young man to whom every one pays such attention?" "Why, he's the brag of the college—they write columns in the papers about him—his name's known in every city of the Union. That's our foot-ball champion." "And who is that young fellow over there by himself—a stranger here?" "N—not exactly—he's a student, but he doesn't amount to much. He only makes a show at the commencement."

A LADY called on a friend who had only been married a few years, and was surprised to find her in tears. "I am an unhappy woman, and it is all on account of my husband." "Why, your husband lives for you alone. He stays at home all the time. He never goes away from home; he never brings any of his friends to the house." "Yes," replied the unfortunate woman, putting her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbing convulsively, "that's—just—what makes me—so miserable."

An English schoolboy wrote as follows on the theme "Breath." We shall not hazard to forecast his future. "Breath is made of air. We breathe with our lungs, our lights, our livers and our kidneys. If it wasn't for our breath we should die when we slept. Our breath keeps the life a-going through the nose when we are asleep. Boys who stay in a room all day should not breathe. They should wait till they get outdoors. Boys in a room make carbonic oxide. Carbonic oxide is more poisonous than mad dogs."

A WELL known chemist was boasting, in company of friends, his well assorted stock-in-trade. "There isn't a drug missing," he said, "not even one of the most uncommon sort." "Come now," said one of the bystanders, by way of a joke, "I bet that you don't keep any spirit of contradiction, well stocked as you pretend to be." "Why not?" replied the chemist, not in the least embarrassed at the unexpected rally. "You shall see for yourself." So saying, he left the group and returned in a few minutes leading by the hand—his wife!

SOCIETY.

The French milliners and colour makers have adopted this season various Russian names for their goods. The new yellow is called "Cronstadt."

The Empress of Austria is better, and, to the astonishment of her medical advisers, was able to attend the christening of her granddaughter, when she held the child at the font.

The Prince of Wales will not let the late Duke of Clarence's favourite charger Paddy pass out of his possession, and he will probably be turned out in Sandringham Park.

"TYPEWRITER'S STUB FINGER" is the name of the newest affliction on the books of the doctors of Philadelphia, and it threatens to become one of the formidable evils of modern civilisation.

One of the latest novelties in jewellery is a gentleman's scarf-pin in Roman gold. This pin is not so much of a novelty as the design, which is a most pronounced and clean-cut interrogation point.

The Czarina of Russia has received the Maria Cross of Honour from her imperial husband. She has for twenty-five years been associated with the charitable institutions founded by the Czar's mother.

One of the latest fancies of fashion has decreed carriage lamps in the shapes of various flowers. There is the lily lamp, the rose lamp, the violet lamp, and so on, all very odd and very expensive.

A number of women of Galicia have submitted a petition to the Emperor of Austria, asking for the right to enter military service. They claim that they are more robust and more courageous than effeminate men.

OPALS have, it seems, quite lost their reputation of being unlucky. At least one would judge so by the beautiful designs now shown by the jewellers. A novelty is an opal in the form of a leaf, with an edge of diamonds.

The most remarkable necklace of modern times, made of pearls, selected with the greatest care during a period of twenty years, and valued at £24,100, is to be presented to the Czarina by the Czar of Russia.

It has already been remarked that the Princess of Wales and her daughters have set a golden example in the matter of extreme simplicity of mourning garb. Their Royal Highnesses' house dresses are of the French material called *lainage*, very soft and of a dead black; but without any crepe or cream jet added to its sombreness.

The ex-Empress Eugénie, whose tiny feet were once clothed in the daintiest and most fairylike slippers, is suffering much from gout and rheumatism. In other respects she is far from well, and although extensive preparations are being made for her winter residence at Farnborough, near Aldershot, her physicians urged a little trip to Egypt instead.

ALTHOUGH the German Emperor resolutely sets his face against the use of everything French, no fewer than five thousand francs' worth of roses from the Riviera were used for the decoration of the room and table on the occasion of the recent christening of Prince Leopold's child. Thirty-five thousand roses were sent to Berlin, at the cost of fifteen francs a hundred, but the secret of their origin was jealously guarded.

It is to be hoped that short waists will soon have their turn again, if only to give us a respite from those monstrously tight, very long bodices, which have reigned supreme in fashion plates for many a month, and driven numbers of poor creatures to the purchase of corsets several inches too small for them. Tight-lacing means invalidism, snappishness, barrels of medicine and doctors' bills in the by-and-by, to say nothing of the expensive courses for red noses and hands; so a change will offer a welcome relief to many small-waisted sufferers.

STATISTICS.

Of the 12 largest cities in the world 3 are in Japan.

LEARNING and wealth are often best used when least shown.

ONLY 10 per cent. of German schoolboys go in for athletics.

ONLY one couple in 11,500 live to celebrate their diamond wedding.

RETURNS show there are over 58,000 artists throughout the country.

THE time required for a journey around the earth by a man walking day and night, without resting, would be 428 days; an express train, 40 days; sound, at a medium temperature, 32½ hours; a cannon ball, 21½ hours; light, a little over one tenth of a second, and electricity, passing over a copper wire, a little under one-tenth of a second.

GEMS.

THE man who has one talent and is improving it will soon have ten.

THERE is but one secret of contentment, and that is to take your present circumstances as a boundary that for a moment cannot be passed, and remain quietly within it.

JUDGE no man by his relations; whatever criticism you may pass upon his companions. Relations, like features, are thrust upon us; companions, like clothes, are more or less our own selection.

THE great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving. To reach the port of Heaven we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it; but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor.

AMONG the continental armies the German soldiers have the longest legs, judging by the length of step, which is eighty centimetres (about thirty-one inches). The step of the French, Austrian, Belgian and Swedish soldiers is found to average seventy-five centimetres, while that of the Russian soldiers rarely exceeds sixty-nine. In a day's march a few more centimetres per step would total up to a length of some importance; besides, it means a better constructed man.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO remove a wart, cover the skin around the wart with lard, apply over the surface of the growth one or two drops of strong nitric acid, then keep the part covered up until the scab separates.

LEMON CHEESECAKES.—One lemon, quarter of a pound of sugar, two ounces of butter, three eggs. Grate the rind of the lemon and squeeze out the juice, and put all the ingredients into an enamelled pan, and stir over the fire till it just comes to a boil. Line patty pans with good paste, fill with the mixture, and bake till ready.

WHITE GINGERBREAD.—Take two pounds and a half of flour, one pound and a quarter of sugar, half a pound of butter, one tablespoonful of ginger, half a teaspoonful of cinnamon, the yolks of two eggs, two gills of milk, and one tablespoonful of saleratus. Rub the flour, butter, sugar, and ginger together; then add all the other ingredients, and knead until the dough looks smooth. The quantity of milk is small, but after being well mixed, will be found sufficient. Roll into thin sheets and cut in any form preferred. Butter the tin slightly, place them together, but do not let them touch, and bake in rather a quick oven. If these particulars be observed a very fine gingerbread will reward the maker of it. Use the best flour and sugar.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MONKEYS are remarkably fond of oysters. The smoke from an expiring candle is poisonous.

FIG-TREES and cedars are rarely struck by lightning.

AN hour lost will get behind you and chase you for ever.

IN the early days of smoking rich people smoked silver pipes. The poorer classes made a walnut-shell and a straw answer their purpose.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury claims the right of placing the crown upon the head of the sovereign of the realm at the coronation.

TERTULLIAN, who wrote about A.D. 195, said that kissing was first instituted for the purpose of discovering whether the person kissed had been guilty of tippling.

INCLUDING the latest division of Africa among the European Powers about four-fifths of the land of the world is under Christian control.

THOUSANDS of men, women and children in the mountains of Spain and Portugal are busied in cutting cork. It is a domestic trade, and it occupies whole villages.

WHY are buttons on men's clothing on the right-hand side, and on women's clothing on the left-hand side? This is curious, but true. It would be interesting to know the reason.

THE largest telegraph office in the world is in London, in the post-office. In it there are over three thousand operators, constantly employed, about one-third of whom are women.

THE secret marks on Bank of England notes, by which forgeries are so rapidly detected, are constantly being changed. The microscope will reveal many such peculiarities to an observant eye.

A CHRISTMAS dinner for the birds is a pretty custom which was last Christmas observed in Norway. A sheaf of corn was fastened to every gable, gateway or barndoor on Christmas morning.

IDA PFIFFER, the first woman to win fame as a traveller, went twice around the world in 1840-1842 and penetrated to the interior of Borneo, Java and Sumatra. She was a native of Vienna, and was regarded as a natural curiosity by the women of her day.

A NEW industry for women has lately come into public notice. They go from house to house among the wealthy classes supplied with spirits of ammonia and other detergents and solicit employment to remove stains from costly garments.

ON account of the famine in Russia the Czar will give no balls this winter, and will devote the sum so saved to the alleviation of the suffering poor. The officers of the Imperial Guard have decided to serve no champagne at their regimental banquets, and use the money for the same good object.

ARTIFICIAL bitter almonds are now produced at a trifling cost, and with such defective skill, that they can scarcely be detected when used as an adulterant of the genuine. They consist chiefly of grape sugar. This is flavoured with a very small quantity of nitro-benzole and when pressed in moulds the product is made to resemble the natural very closely.

AN experiment is being made in shipping fresh salmon from the Pacific coast to Europe. If it be successful, fresh salmon will be shipped hereafter instead of "canned salmon." Thirty thousand pounds were shipped in a car from the Fraser River, and thence, in the cold storage room of a German steamship to Hamburg.

DWARF trees, only two feet high, exact reproductions in miniature of sycamores, oaks, cedars, and apple trees, have for 200 or 300 years been raised by the Japanese. The mode of producing them is a well-guarded secret; but some French gardeners have within the past five years almost equalled the Japanese in the production of the dwarf trees.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DIGNITY.—January 27, 1880, fell on Sunday.
A SYMPATHISER.—Lee is still in penal servitude.
A NOVICE.—You may legally give a receipt in pencil.
NANCY LEE.—It is not illegal to melt down sovereigns.
TOMMY.—Harry Sullivan, actor, died May 3, aged 67.
ANTIQUITY.—A good green cashmere shawl is worth £90.
H. G.—No Army Reserve man can join the navy as a stoker.
BECKLESS.—All who take part in lotteries are liable to penalties.
M. R.—The Governor of Sierra Leone is Sir James Shaw Hay.
ANXIOUS FOR ADVICE.—You may safely do what you propose.
Snow Queen.—The Chicago "World's Fair" is intended to be held in 1893.
SPOT.—Cardinal Manning was never in Parliament, nor did he try to get in.
A. B. S.—A distress can only be levied between sunrise and sunset.
JOB.—The Tichborne Claimant was convicted on three counts for perjury.
BROKEN-HEART.—The Second Battalion Royal Scots are going to India, not coming home at all.
A SCOTCH WIFE.—A marriage which is legal in Scotland would be legal in England.
SUFFERER.—Diseases of the eye are often the result of general weakness.
REPORT.—The War Office is in Pall Mall, and the Home Office at Whitehall.
COUNTRY BUMPKIN.—Both stations at Worcester belong to the Great Western Railway Company.
WOFUL ANNIE.—We never give advice on medical recipes; that is not within our province at all.
DIFFICULTIES.—Rent, rates, and taxes have a preferential claim in bankruptcy over wages.
DARBY AND JOAN.—Fourpenny pieces withdrawn 1880. Only coined occasionally now for "Maundy" money.
BETWEEN TWO STOOLES.—If you knowingly signed a lawful agreement it can be fully enforced against you.
A SILLY CHILD.—December 31 was on a Saturday in 1381; Sunday, 1882; and Monday, 1883.
ROBIN.—Huff Harbour is in New Zealand. A sailing vessel should take three months to come.
T. R.—If your income from all sources is £150, but under £400, you may claim reduction of £130.
PEARL.—One of the very best tooth powders, which is also quite inexpensive, is camphorated chalk.
BLANCHET.—We never heard of such a proceeding. You had better inquire at the asylum where you wish to get the child.
A CITIZEN.—Parliament made a special grant to the Prince of Wales of £30,000 a year for the support of his children.
H. R.—The School Board report showing salaries of the teachers is confidential, and not available to the press.
DELLON.—Any citizen is bound under penalty to assist a constable in the execution of his duty if called upon to do so.
MILLICENT.—The letters "R.S.V.P." stand for the French equivalent of the English phrase "Reply, if you please."
MARGUR.—The Great Eastern was built and launched at Millwall, on the Thames, the operation lasting from 3rd November, 1857, to January 31st, 1858.
CHORLEY.—Having once been tried for an offence you cannot be put on trial again, no matter what new evidence may be forthcoming.
A. B. C.—The lines occur in Shakespeare's *Othello*, Act III. scene 3, to which we must refer you for the correct quotation.
DESPAIRING MABEL.—Hunter River is about fifty miles north-west of Sydney, having the important colonial coal port, Newcastle, at its mouth.
S. A.—Messrs. Moody and Sankey first appeared in London, March 9, 1875; but had already been in the country several months.
JACK.—A captain's salary, according to size of vessel and ability, averages from £15 to £30 a month; first mate from £7 to £8; second mate, £4 to £5 10s.
GARNOTS.—If you purchased a pawn-ticket you have the same right to redeem and sell the goods as was possessed by the person selling you the ticket.
R. B.—The engine-room equipment of an Atlantic racer is 10 to 12 engineers, 70 firemen, 40 coal-trimmers, a boiler-maker, and an electrician—130 to 134 all told.
JUANITA.—Give your gold fish now and again a very little raw beef grated, or raw fish similarly treated; crumbs of sponge biscuit may be given to vary food.
INQUIRER.—The followers of the three religions, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, all combined, are less in number than the Christians alone.

IN WANT OF ADVICE.—Olantha is not at all a healthy district for Europeans. St. Petersburg is unquestionably preferable, provided you are not a man up in years.

THE REJECTED ONE.—"Pouring oil on troubled waters" is not a quotation, but a proverbial saying, like some others which have no special source, being found in identical shape in several languages.

BARTON.—The population of the following cities at the recent census was: London (metropolitan district), 4,311,056; Liverpool, 517,931; Manchester, 505,843; Birmingham, 419,171; Glasgow, 564,968.

IN A FIX.—You should never sign any paper offered you by a book-bawker. Refuse to take any more, and explain to the county court judge (if summoned) that the signature was obtained by misrepresentation.

MARGUERITE.—Cleaning and renewing an old oil painting is such a very delicate task that it ought never to be undertaken by one who is not an expert at the business.

WORRIED LANDLADY.—We presume you accepted charge of the goods on the lodger leaving. That being so, you are responsible for taking reasonable care of them until claimed.

GARRIE.—George Stephenson, the great English engineer, died in 1848. His son Robert died in 1859. It was the first named who declined the honour of knighthood.

ADMIRING READER.—A woman in drowning invariably falls forward on her face, and floats in that position; a man, on the other hand, is more often upon his back, or at least with face up.

LINES TO A COQUETTE.

DEAR DI, I've just heard from Bar Harbour
 Some news that surprises me quite.
 A friend writes that you are *de rigueur*,
 The other girls all out of sight.

He says you can't count your adores
 On the fingers of both of your hands,
 Who are always awaiting your orders,
 And anticipate all your commands.

He says that my lady is charming,
 So dainty and wistful and gay,
 But the hearts she has slain is alarming;
 —All this of my fair fiancée.

Dear DI, I don't want to reprove you,
 So don't put me down as a scold,
 I know you've but just made your debut,
 And moreover you're not very old.

I know that you love me, for often
 I have seen the love light in your eyes,
 And when I approach your tones soften,
 And you breathe little rapturous sighs.

Though I cannot be with you, behold me
 In metaphor low as your feet,
 With a plea, for this you'll not scold me,
 And in future you'd be more discreet.

Next week I shall be with you, maybe,
 I shall live, until then, on the rack,
 Think often of me, and believe me
 Yours, ever devotedly, Jack.

C. B.

POKELED.—The initials "P. P. C." on a visiting card stand for "Four Friends could—" "to take leave"; that is to say "Good-bye" on leaving the neighbourhood.

JEMIMA.—At a silver wedding the presents consist of silver articles either for personal adornment—brooches, pins, etc.—or for use—tea or coffee pot, jelly glass, must stand, etc., etc.

AUNT.—Under existing English law marriage with a deceased wife's sister is illegal. The children of such a marriage would consequently be treated by the law as illegitimate.

ONE WHO WANTS ADVICE.—If it is settled that you must go either to one place or other let it be to Colorado (Denver). There is a far wider field of possibilities in the States than in South Africa.

JUSTIN.—You can assume any name you think fit for purposes of trade, as long as you do so in a spirit of perfect honesty and fair dealing. Better make a firm or partnership by saying "G. & Co."

IGNORANT ONE.—Any paper will do, so long as the will is properly drawn, signed, and witnessed by two witnesses, who must see the testator's signature, and sign in the presence of each other.

T. T.—It would scarcely be correct to say you will get a shock, but if you put a penny and a bit of nine same s's into your mouth you will have a sharp twinge or metallic taste along your palate.

GRANDDAD.—If you are inclined to be round-shouldered don't wear an overcoat that is too heavy. Two or three inches saved in the length of a thick overcoat material reduces its weight.

G. V.—1. The average duration of human life is said to be about 33 years. It is also stated that one-quarter of the people on the earth die before the age of 5. One-half before the age of sixteen, and only about one person of each 100 born lives to the age of 65. 2. The deaths on the earth are calculated at 67 per minute, 97,790 per day, and 35,659,335 per year; the births at 70 per minute, 100,500 per day, and 36,792,000 per year. 3.

INDIGNANT.—No one excepting Board of Trade officers is allowed to go on board any vessel on her arrival. After he leaves the captain may prevent anyone going on board. The vessel is presumed to be the captain's castle.

MERMAID.—It is a fact that hair often grows luxuriantly in weakly persons, and there are instances in which it has grown after death; but it does not necessarily indicate a weakly constitution, and need not be injurious if worn loosely.

O. C. H.—We cannot give you the average consumption of coal by Atlantic liners, but the City of Rome one of the largest, consumes about three hundred tons of coal every twenty-four hours while on voyage. We have no record as to Australian liners.

QUEEN BEHNER.—The brunette type is becoming more numerous in England and on the Continent generally. Mr. Gladstone, who observes most things, said some years ago that light-haired people were far less numerous than in his youth.

O. F.—Old Fellowship shows a remarkable growth for so old a society, and if it maintains its present rate of gain for twenty-five years more its membership will be enormous. It is destined to be the largest order in the world, if not already so.

A CRICKET.—The "city" of London is one thing, and the metropolitan district, commonly called London, is another. To which do you refer? The Greater London has a population approaching 5,000,000, of which but a small proportion live in "the city."

B. C. F.—Southwark Bridge, designed by John Rennie, was built by a public company at a cost of £800,000. It consists of three cast-iron arches, the centre 340 feet span, and the two side ones of 210 feet, raised above 40 feet over the highest tides.

THEOPHILUS.—The needle of the compass points to the magnetic pole, not to the north pole. The magnetic pole is somewhere north-west of Hudson's Bay. So in places east of the meridian of the magnetic pole the needle points a little west of north.

ARLINC.—When applied to physical matters there is no difference between the words "broad" and "wide." A broad plain is the same as a wide plain. But "broad" is applied to mental or immaterial things, as well as to physical, as: broad fun, a broad joke, etc.

HENRY STINE.—We do not altogether understand your letter. You say that he has sent the bill to "us," but we do not quite see who "us" is. If your husband ordered the goods and received them he would be liable, not otherwise. Of course, you know he has no liability for anything contracted under the age of twenty-one.

A LOVER OF BEAUTY.—1. The only way to get rid of them is to pull each hair out by the roots. Cutting will, of course, only make them grow the more. 2. Perhaps your red nose is owing to indigestion, in that case you had better consult a medical man. 3. Try the juice of a lemon, or a water-melon.

FARD.—Military service in Germany is compulsory, not voluntary as with us. Every German capable of bearing arms has to be in the standing army (or navy) for seven years, as a rule from the finished 18th to the beginning of the 25th year of his age, though liability to the service begins when his 17th year is completed.

CANADA.—God clear his two inches thick will bear men to walk on; the same, four inches thick, will bear horses and riders; the same, six inches thick, will bear horses and teams with moderate loads; the same, ten inches thick, will bear a pressure of 1,000 pounds per square foot.

A. T. T.—Chill extends from within 12 deg. of the Antarctic Circle to the hot torrid districts of the Tropics of Capricorn, so that the harvests are more forward in some parts than in others, but generally it may be said that spring commences in September, summer in December, autumn in March, and winter in June.

BOY BEN.—Try mending your gloves with fine cotton instead of silk. It will soil in a day, and, taking the colour of the glove, will not be observed; while silk, you remember, has a gloss that prevents it from harmonising with the tone of its surroundings, and attention is constantly being called to the fact that your gloves are mended.

SAM.—Old pictures have no standard value. To the general public the collection you possess is not worth 5s., we assure you; but an antiquary might offer as many pounds for them. The question is, how to find the antiquary? Try a small advertisement in a morning paper. If you get no offers, then the auction room is the alternative.

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